

THE
Parable of the Ten Virgins,
In its Peculiar Relation to the
Coming, and Glorious KINGDOM
OF OUR
Lord Jesus Christ,

OPENED,

According to the Analogy of the whole Parable,
and of Scripture in General, and Practically
Applied, for Exercising all the Churches to Holy
Watchfulness, *Mark iv. 13.*

WITH AN

✕ APOLOGY for the Hope of the Kingdom
of Christ, Appearing within this Approach-
ing Year, 1697.

Wherein some of the Principal Arguments for such
an Expectation, are briefly Couch'd, and the Greater Objections An-
swered. Presented to the Notice and Examination of the

Arch-Bishops and Bishops

Now in PARLIAMENT Assembled.

By **T. BEVERLET.**

*Ezek. 10. 13. As concerning the Wheels, It was cryed to them, in my Heat-
ing, Oh! Revolution!*

L O N D O N:

Printed for, and Sold by Will. Marshall at the Bible in Newgate-
Street, and John Marshall at the Bible in Grace-Church-Street,
1697.

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and the Bible in Grace-Church-Street.*

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The

THE
Parable of the Ten Virgins,
Opened and Applied.

S E R M O N I.

On Matth. 25. from Ver. 1, to 13.

1. Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto Ten Virgins, which took their Lamps, and went forth to meet the Bridegroom.
2. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.
3. They that were foolish, took their Lamps, and took no Oil with them.
4. But the wise took Oil in their Vessels, with their Lamps.
5. While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.
6. And at midnight there was a Cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.
7. Then all those Virgins arose, and trimmed their Lamps.
8. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your Oil, for our Lamps are gone out.
9. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for your selves.
10. And while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came, and they that were ready, went in with him to the Marriage, and the door was shut.
11. Afterward came also the other Virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.
12. But he answered, and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.
13. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.

I Have often had it in my Thoughts and Desires, to open this Great Parable of the Kingdom to you: Wherein (as Christ faith) he hath declared things, that had been kept secret from the very Foundation of the World.

B

But,

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But, indeed, I fear an Inability to open this Parable, according to the Greatest Importance and Sense of it.

I have yet, by the Assistance of God, and through the Great Author of it, undertaken to offer to you the utmost of Light that I can, from so Rich a Portion of Scripture; But still saying, *Who is sufficient for these things?* I know, it contains in it self a Point of the Greatest Concernment to every one of us: And the Greater, and the Fairer our Profession of Christianity is, the Greater is our Obligation to consider it. For, you see, here is nothing in the Text but a *Virgin-State*; and that imports the Purity of a Profession; the Highest and the Purest Profession of Christ and of his Name. And yet, as you may easily observe, what a great Danger and Hazard there is in the Purest Profession, that we should come short of the Great End. For why were Five of these Virgins shut for ever out of the Glory and Happiness of the End?

The Point that I aim at to discourse upon, I'll give you in the General: And then shew you, in every Particular, how the Parable Answers to it; And how Great the Wisdom of Christ is. He spake indeed (as it is said in the Gospel) *as never man spake*. No meer Created Man was ever able to find out such Lively Images and Representations of Things as he did; and as he hath given us the Instance and Example of, in this very Parable. I say therefore, here is the main Point that I propose to you:

That even the Highest, and most Excellent Professors of Christianity, have great need, and an Obligation lying upon them, to take care, that while they make so excellent a Profession, they have that, that will bear out, and will last in that State of the Kingdom of Christ; and of the Glory of it; I say, the Highest and Purest Professors.

Suppose any of us say, We are not as Heathens; and we are not as Antichristians; and we are not as the Loofer and General Professors of Christianity are: But we are Virgins; we are of the Purest, and of the most Refined Profession of Christianity.

Our Lord here allows it to us; we may be so, and yet, notwithstanding this; we are to be under this severe Caution, *That we are not found foolish Virgins*, that have not the Truth and Power of Christianity, or only a Profession that will go out, as a Lamp extinguished and quenched, and cast out into utter Darkness, when it comes to the strictest and highest Examination.

Now this our Saviour hath comprized under Three Generals, that you may observe in this Parable, which I will at this time,
(first

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(first of all, but in gross, and in short) deliver to you; and then Endeavour, by the Assistance of God, to be more Exact upon the Particulars of it.

First, Therefore, that we may understand it, we are to observe, That this Parable represents the Kingdom of Heaven; and, the Kingdom of Heaven is to be understood, *First*, In the opening of it, in the Preaching of the Gospel, and in the drawing of the Minds and Hearts of those that hear it, unto it. That's the first Notion of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Kingdom of Heaven shall be likened unto Ten Virgins, which took their Lamps, and went forth to meet the Bridegroom.

This speaks the whole State of the Gospel, from that Fulness of Time, as I have Stiled it, from the Apostle *Paul*, to the Fulness of Times, or of All Times; from the time of the Death and Resurrection of *Jesus Christ*, from that time, 'till the Bridegroom himself comes. The Kingdom of Heaven, It is the Preaching of the Gospel daily and continually, to all those to whom it is offered and tendred. And asto this, *He that hath an Ear to hear, let him hear.*

Secondly, This Kingdom of Heaven, it is to be considered, As it shall open it self in the Glory of the Appearance of *Jesus Christ*. For, the Kingdom of Heaven doth not lose it self, when the Preaching of the Gospel is at an end, and when that, which we count the Day of Judgment, comes; but it passes then into another State, into its Glory, and into its visible Appearance: It comes then into the highest Celebration of the Nuptials, and of the Wedding.

For, they went forth to meet the Bridegroom. And it is said, That the Bridegroom came, and they that were ready, went in with him into the Wedding, and the Door was shut. So the Kingdom of Heaven lasts from that Preaching of the Gospel, from the Death and Resurrection of Christ, unto the Glory of the Kingdom, in the Appearance of Christ, and of all his Saints with him. Which (as I say, and as you shall after hear) is the highest Celebration of the Wedding, and of the Nuptials.

The *Second Head* of Discourse on this Parable, in which our Lord hath presented this great Truth to us, is the Representation of those that make Profession of him, in the purest, and in the most refined way; and therefore they are all called Virgins: Even those that had not Oil in their Lamps; yet still they are called Virgins.

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And those that were not only the wise, but the foolish; still they are called Virgins. And what is the Reason of this? but that Christ might press the harder and closer upon every one of our Consciences.

If you say (and you know we are ready to value and rate our selves by it) we have a better Profession, and a better Worship; and we do not as others do, whose way, and whose worship, and whose profession we condemn; but we are as Virgins in our Worship. Therefore I say, Christ hath given us the whole Frame of the Doctrine, in a Parable of Virgins; in a Representation of a Virgin-state. Indeed, in some places of Scripture, this Metaphor, or Resemblance of a Virgin, imports the Truth, and the power of Grace; and where there is no want of all that Excellency of Christianity, that is necessary to the Perfection, and to the Glory of it, in this present State, but here it is otherwise; and it is to this very purpose, that none of us might rest in an outward Profession. And therefore we may observe the several particulars under this Virgin-state, that our Lord hath Represented.

First of all, That *Five* were *Wise*, and *Five* were *Foolish*. And then,

In the *Second Place*, Wherein the Wisdom of the *one*, and Folly of the *other* consisted. The Wisdom was, in taking Oil in the Vessel, with their Lamps: The Folly was, in taking no Oil with them, but only in their Lamps; but thinking to make a shift (as we say) with what was in the Profession.

In the *Third Place*, We have the Consideration of their Behaviour, or of their State, in the Time between the Preaching of the Gospel first, and then, the Glory of the Nuptials. While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbred and slept.

I must indeed let you know, That I Interpret this otherwise, than the Generality of those that have Spoken or Written upon it, have done. For this Slumbring and Sleeping, I do not look upon as the same; that they were in a Spiritual Slumber, not Sleep; but I look upon it only as suitable to the Parable, to be a Representation of the dying of those that make Profession of Christianity; that is, throughout the Time, that great Space of Time between those two Points, *viz.* the fulness of Time, and the fulness of all Times. There are many gone out of the World, many of those that were Virgins in their Profession; and they then Slumbred; then Slept; that

is,

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is, they have died, and gone out of the World, in this State of Profession.

Now, the Reason that I give, why I should so Interpret, is this; Because it is very plain, by what our Saviour speaks, That the wise Virgins did never Spiritually Sleep; they were not in a Spiritual Sleep; that is, It was not the Character of their State.

And therefore I look upon it only thus, as *Solomon* saith, They had come and gone from the place of Judgment. So I say, they had come, and gone out of the State of the World, and the Profession of Christianity; and they have entred into a State, which to us that are here in the World, looks like Mid-Night Sleeping. As now, if we speak of the Apostles that have died; they have (as it were) deeply Slept, ever since the time that they went out of the World. And so the Saints that we have known here in the World; we may say as the Scripture doth, *They fell asleep*; and there has been a Slumber upon them as to their Profession; they have not manifested that LIFE and POWER of Christianity. And then in the Fourth Place; here's the Case, and the State of these Virgins, upon the coming of the Bridegroom. At Midnight there was a Cry made, *Behold, the Bridegroom cometh. Go ye forth to meet him.*

And that I look upon, to be intended of the Resurrection. *That voice of the Son of God; That they that are in the Graves shall hear; and they that hear shall live, and they shall come forth out of their Graves.* The wise and the foolish Virgins, they die alike, and they come forth out of their Graves; that is, both the one and the other Rise again, and appear before Christ.

In the Fifth Place; as soon as the Bodies, and Souls or Spirits, are Re-united; immediately, all those that are raised, go to the Trimming of their Lamps; that is, they immediately Reflect upon what they had been doing here in the World; how they had Lived, what they had Acted; how they had answered their Profession. They arise, and Trim their Lamps; they come with that Profession of Christianity they have made.

And that's the Second Head of Discourse in this Parable. And then,

The Third is, the Result, Issue, and Event of all this. What was the different State then, of the *Wise*, and of the *Foolish*? As soon as ever the Foolish Virgins came to tryal of their Lamps; immediately

mediately they found a want of Oil. They found a want of that Power, of that Glory, of that Life of Christianity, that should bear them up in the Time of the Wedding, of the Glory of the Kingdom of Christ. And therefore, that you may understand this Parable, you must consider, That amongst those *Eastern Nations*, their great Solemnities were in the Night; their great Nuptial Feasts, and their great Entertainments; they were in the Night: And so, every one did (as it were) bring their Lamps. Here is the curious Colour and Art of the Parable, or the Picture; every Person that came to those Night-Entertainments? which were their greatest; As I tell you, They brought with them, a Lamp, a Light to stand by them; and that so the Glory of the Feast, or of the Entertainment, might arise from those many Lights that were shining together, that every one brought.

Now, therefore (saith Christ) the Foolish Virgins, came with their Lamps, and they had no Oil; they had no Oil to bear out the Glory of the Feast, the Glory of the Wedding, of that great Nuptial, the *Marriage-Supper of the Lamb*, as it is called, *Rev. 19.*

So, as soon as ever they found the want of Oil, they were in an Amazement, they were immediately upon the earnest pursuit and care of the supply of that want. When they found, we shall never be able to bear out with the Glory of the Wedding, immediately they say to the *Wife*, *Give us of your Oil.* But the *Wife* said unto them, *Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for your selves.* Go, and provide it; go, and take care for it. This is spoken only, to fill up the Parable; not that the thing could be so; but only to represent the thing as lively as might be. And while they went to buy, the *Bridegroom* came. And they that were ready, went in with him to the *Marriage*, and the Door was shut; presently shut. That is, they went into the great Hall, to the great Room of Entertainment, to the Palace of the *Bridegroom*: They went in, that were ready; and the Door was presently shut. If any one was not ready; if they had not Oil in their Lamps, the Door was presently shut. If they had not such a Provision, as would bear out that Entertainment, and went to provide, they were presently shut out. And here,

In the last place, That is the great Use and Application that Christ makes of it: *Watch therefore; for ye know neither the Day nor the Hour when the Son of Man cometh.* Wherein our Saviour still bears out,

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out, according to the Nature of the Type, and to fill up all the Parts of it, and all the Colours of the Picture.

For, the meaning is no more than this;

Look well to this, That you have a Provision, a Treasure of Grace, that will last out the whole Time of the Wedding Solemnity: For, if you have not, you will not be able to make a Provision then; you will be as those that are unready.

Now, that this is the meaning of *Watching*, is very plain from hence; because the Virgins that had Oil in their Lamps, and in their Vessels too; they *Slumbered* and *Slept*, yet they went immediately into the *Wedding*.

But all those that had only *Oil* in their *Lamps*, and not in their *vessels*, they were shut out; there was no possibility of making Provision for themselves at that time.

From all which particulars then, that I have given you at this Time but the Generals of, I collect,

Let it be our care, let us seriously look to it, that we make such a provision now, that may last out that whole State; that is, That we have such Grace, as will bear out the Tryal of that Day, and that Time.

That's the main Importance of this so great Parable, so excellent Parable; that every one of us should look to it, That we have such Treasure, such real Riches of Grace in the Blood of Jesus, and in the power of his Death and Resurrection upon us, that will comport with that great Solemnity of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. And let us not say among all the Professions and Ways that there are in the VWorld, we have chosen out what we think the best, and the purest: It is not enough, that we are Virgins in our Profession, but we must have this rich Treasure, this real Treasure of Grace in our Hearts. This, I say, is the main Importance of this great Parable, and it Issues into this, That we should take heed of pleasing our selves in a Profession; and that we should be under the power of this Apprehension, That the most excellent Profession that there is in the World, in the whole Christian Name, whatever it is that shall have the Precedency above any other; yet if our Hearts are not Enriched with the true Grace of God, and of Jesus Christ, we do not know the Truth, as it is in Christ effectually. And therefore indeed, there is not any place of Scripture that Imports a greater Severity, or makes more necessary tryal and search into our State and Condition, than this very Parable does. For when it gives.

gives a Representation of the purest State that can be given; that is, to call all Virgins; and yet that some of these are shut out for ever, from the Glory of the Kingdom of Christ; How should it (as our Saviour speaks in a like Parable) engage us to *strive to enter in at the strait Gate*? For *many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able. Many of the Children of the Kingdom shall be thrust out*; as Christ speaks in another place. This is the great care therefore that should lie upon us, to secure the inward part, the vital part, the true Power, the true Light of Christianity, that shall never be as a Lamp put out in obscure Darknels. If you look upon the 14 *Revel.* you may see what a high Importance this very Word, or Representation of *Virgins* hath; saith the Spirit of God there, concerning those that were in the purity of *Christian Religion*; These (saith he) are *VIRGINS*, and *have not defiled themselves with Women*, as other Professors of the Name of Christ had; with the Impurity that others were defiled with. For they are *Virgins*, and *they follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth*.

So that though this be so great a Representation of the purity of Christian Religion; yet you see here in this *Parable*, our Saviour hath taken this very Representation to set forth the State, that yet shall miscarry in the End, to Eternity. And so the Apostle Paul, 2 *Cor.* 11. 2. *I am Jealous over you with a godly Jealousie; for I have espoused you to one Husband, that I may present you as a chaste Virgin to Christ.*

You see sometimes, this Representation, Metaphor, or Emblem of a Virgin is made use of, to speak the highest and truest *Purity*. And yet, our Lord doth (as it were) abase and humble it here, in speaking of the *Foolish Virgins*; that he might gain his main point and end: That is, to tell us, The most excellent *Profession*, let it be what it will, it will not avail us, if there be not the truth and power of Christianity in it.

I shall therefore, according to the particulars I have laid down to you, endeavour to open this great *Point* all along, by those lively *Resemblances*, that our Lord hath given us in this *Parable*.

In the first place, I shall consider the State of the Gospel, as it is here called the *Kingdom*; in its setting out, from the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, till it attains that great *Point of Glory*, its manifestation in the visible Appearance of our Lord Jesus: It is all the while, the *Kingdom of Heaven*. Then shall the *Kingdom of Heaven* be likened.

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So as I have Represented to you, from *Gal. 4.* and *Ephes. 1.* Here's the whole State, or Time of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and of all the course and motion it runs: It begins in the preaching of the Gospel, and it ends in the Glory of it, *Gal. 4. 4.* I look upon it to be a great Foundation of all that Discourse, that I have endeavoured to Instruct you by, concerning the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ. But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the Law. The first Appearance of Christ, it is called the *Fulness of Time*; that's the beginning point of it. And then, there's the *Recapitulation*, the gathering of all things again into Christ; and that is, as the Apostle tells us, *Eph. 1. 10.* In the dispensation of the fulness of Times, he will gather together in one, all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are in Earth, even in him. In the *Fulness of Time*, Christ came to bear the sins of many. In the *fulness of Times*, he gathers all into himself. So that the *Kingdom of Heaven*, it hath its beginning in the first Appearance of Christ; and it hath its uttermost Glory in the gathering together in one all things into Christ. And then it is delivered up into the Kingdom of Eternity. We should therefore apprehend our selves, even now under the preaching of the Gospel, that we are under the motion of the *Kingdom of Heaven*; here's the beginning of it. And then we should look to our selves, and draw All to the Issue, and last Result. For, the *Kingdom of Heaven* lasts till that great Solemnity of the *Marriage-Supper of the Lamb*; it lasts to that very time, and so it continues till the *Kingdom is delivered up to God, all in all.*

You shall find as soon as ever Christ came to be Preached, and to be declared, immediately there is the use of this very Phrase, *The Kingdom of Heaven*, *Mat. 3. 2.* John the Baptist went out, and said, Repent ye, for the *Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* And so it is said of Christ; that He also went forth to Preach in the very same manner; Repent (saith he) for the *Kingdom of Heaven is at hand*, *Mat. 4. 17.* So that here is the whole State of the *Kingdom of Heaven*, it begins at the Preaching of our Lord Jesus Christ; and it goes on to the Perfection, and to the Glory of the Kingdom.

Let us therefore observe what is the motion of the Gospel upon our Hearts; because it is the *Kingdom of Heaven.* And we should look to the Power, and to the mighty Influences that it hath upon our Souls in that very regard; because that it is the *Kingdom of Heaven*.

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even in its first beginnings, and in its first Preparations, till it comes into the Glory of it self.

I shall therefore Endeavour at this time, to Discourse this Point to you, concerning this Power of the Gospel, as it is *the Kingdom*; and Apply it, by way of strong Reflection upon our own Hearts; And that we may consider what our own State and Condition is, in relation to it.

First therefore, *The Kingdom of Heaven* is the offer of the Great Salvation of Jesus Christ unto Souls; It is the Offer of that great State that shall be hereafter. There is a present Offer of it to us now. The Gospel comes to this very purpose, to invite us, by the present Preaching, and by the outward Publication and Administration of it: It comes to Invite us to that great Kingdom, that is called, *The Kingdom of Heaven*. The Gospel represents it self now to us, with all the earnestness, and Wooing-Language, that we may be drawn in unto Jesus Christ. This is the first thing wherein it is called, and worthy to be called, *The Kingdom of Heaven*; because it comes with the offer of Heaven, and with the offer of Life and Grace unto every Soul. Heaven is bowed down; *God rends the Heavens*, and comes down to us in the preaching of the Gospel. It is called therefore, *the Kingdom of Heaven taken from one, and given to another*. *The Kingdom of Heaven shall be taken from you, and given to a Nation bringing forth the fruits of it*, Mat. 2. 43. Because this Kingdom makes an offer of Life, and an offer of Grace to every Soul. It is that very thing that the Apostle speaks of, in 2 Cor. 5. 19. *God was in Christ, reconciling the World unto himself; and not imputing to them their Trespases. Wherefore (saith he) we are Ambassadors for Christ, (ver. 20.) as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's Stead, be ye reconciled to God.* God is pleased to make an offer to every one that hears of *the Kingdom of Heaven*: He bows the Heaven (as I said) down to you, and to you, and to every one of us that are under the preaching of his Gospel. The Kingdom of Heaven stoops down, it condescends it self to make a gracious Offer to every one that hears it this Day. *If any one will, let him come and take the water of life freely*: As it is said, Rev. 22. 17. *If any one hath a Mind, and a Desire to the Kingdom of Heaven, when it is thus offered.* Christ therefore laid the Foundation of it in his own Coming.

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11

He begins it by *John the Baptist*, that was to prepare his way, and he carried it on by himself. And still, by one *Series* and Course of his Servants after another, he hath taken care, that in one part of the World, or other, ever since the Resurrection of Christ, there hath been an offer of this *Kingdom of Heaven* all along, to the Sons of Men, in the publick Preaching of the Gospel. Indeed, I know, the Wisdom, and Glory, and Sovereignty of God hath greatly manifested it self; in that there are many Nations at this very Day, that have not the *Kingdom of Heaven* Preached to them. And even amongst our selves, what variety there is in the Dispensation of this *Word of the Kingdom* unto us? As our Saviour calls it, *The Word of the Kingdom*, *Matth. 13. 19.* When any one beareth the *Word of the Kingdom*. So that's the first Notion that Scripture gives us of the Kingdom of Heaven; it is in the offer of Life, and Grace, and Salvation by Jesus Christ, in the publick Preaching of the Gospel. Now thus indeed, Men may seem (as it were) at their choice, and at their Election, whether they will accept the Kingdom of Heaven, or not, whether any one will open their Ears, and hear.

How many say, If this be the Kingdom of Heaven; we do not at all desire it? They turn their Backs upon it, and refuse, slight, and contemn it; because it is not with Majesty enough (as they think) and it does not bring present Glory and Advantage enough.

It therefore tells us, It is not the present State, it is not the present Condition. We are ready to say, What does it bring us? And where is the Power and Glory it brings along with it now?

This therefore now we are Taught, That the Kingdom of Heaven is only now, by way of Doctrine; by way of Offer; by way of gracious Proposal to the Souls of Men; it does not yet come in its Majesty, Glory, and in its Power. But as I shall shew you, in the third Particular, The Kingdom of Heaven never rests, till it comes in its Glory, and in its Majesty.

This therefore is the first Expression of it; the preaching of the Gospel is the Kingdom of Heaven; the Sounding of Christ and Salvation in your Ears, telling you of an Everlasting State and Condition of Happiness, or Misery, if you refuse. This is the lifting up of many, as our Saviour speaks, which is a very lively Consideration upon the Point that I am now upon. *Mat. 11. 20.* He began to upbraid the Cities, wherein his mighty Works had been done; because they repented not. *Wo unto thee Chorazin, wo unto thee Bethsaida; for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon,*

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for, they would have repented long ago, in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the Day of Judgment, than for you. And thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto Heaven, shalt be brought down to Hell; for if the mighty Works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, than for thee. Here you see, we have the preaching of the Gospel; and the offer of Christ; this is the Kingdom of Heaven bowing, and stooping to you; making an offer of it self, freely to you, and (as we say) courting the Acceptance of Souls. We should look upon it as so: not for the worthiness of those that speak, or for the Ability with which they speak; but the Source of all is, this excellent Doctrine of the Gospel; that we have in the Word of God. And indeed, if we had not a Tongue to speak it, or Ears to hear it; yet to behold the mighty Government of God, and Christ, the evil of Sin, and the excellency of Grace, and of the Spirit of God, and of the Salvation of Christ, throughout; it is to put you into Heaven, to introduce you into Heaven, even while you are here upon Earth. Do not think that it is a small thing, that these excellent Promises, these excellent Doctrines, these excellent Exhortations and Counsels are Administred unto you: For, it is even Heaven upon Earth, this very Word of God; and, for the preaching of it, that is only a further Ordination of God; that every one may have it spoken unto them, and be persuaded, *In season, and out of season*; and that there might be a more forcible Application upon the Souls of Men. But if we have but the Word of God (this Scripture) lying in our Houses, we have the Kingdom of Heaven (I may say) lying in our Houses, in this Sense I am now speaking of it to you: You have it, because you have this excellent Doctrine of Christ: And there are Scriptures; there are many Scriptures, that are so exceeding clear and plain, that he may run that reads. No one that hath but this Book of God, either that he Reads, or, that is ordinarily read to him; but he may say, I am exalted herein to Heaven; because I have such an excellent Scripture, such an excellent Gospel continually before me.

So the very Sound of it, the very Motion of it in the World; it is the great Happiness of those parts of the World that have it. And we have great Reason to say, in this place, in this City, in this Nation; and especially, wherever God lights up a clearer Taper and Torch of his Gospel; we have Reason to say, That Heaven is come down

down to us; and that we can go when we please, and Read one of the excellent Sermons and Discourses of our Lord Jesus in the Gospel: That we can go to the Epistles, and read those admirable Things that the Spirit of God hath given out by the Apostle *Paul, James, and John*. These things, you do not Apprehend the great Advantage of them.

We talk of Heaven, and we would be glad to go to Heaven; and Heaven is the great Burden of all our wishes, and all our hopes. Behold (saith Christ) *the Kingdom of Heaven is here among us*; the Truth of his Word lying open to us.

How dreadful therefore will even that Dust that gathers upon our Bibles, from day to day be! I say what a Testimony will it be! And, as our Saviour saith to those that he sent out to Preach his Gospel; *It shall be more tolerable (saith he) for Sodom and Gomorrah, than for those that refuse it.* And the very dust of your feet (saith he) *when you depart out of that City, shake off, as a witness against them*, Mat. 10. 14. So the very dust of our Bibles will rise up in Judgment against us; because, when God hath opened the Windows of Heaven to us in it; we have refused, and scorned, and despised, and (to Speak in our ordinary Language) counted it as a Book out of date, because we have had it so long. O! If you did but know what a value the Martyrs, in the Days of Queen Mary, set upon it, when the Light was but just sprung out; what a value did they put upon the Scriptures! And indeed, if God were cutting us short, and a Famine of his Word coming upon us; we should then say, what a great Treasure is God taking from us! And yet how many Hours do we pass in the Day, and not read of Christ, and of the Kingdom of Heaven, that is so pourtrayed and explained in the Gospel to us?

There is a Time that is set out to us by Prophecy; and there's great Reason to hope that it is very near, when this Kingdom of Heaven, in the Everlasting Gospel, shall Ride (as it were) Circuit, or rather, at one time be heard from the midst of Heaven, throughout the whole Earth, Rev. 14. 6. *I saw an Angel fly through the midst of Heaven, having the Everlasting Gospel to Preach unto them that dwell on the Earth, and to every Kindred, and Tongue, and People. This Everlasting Gospel of the Kingdom of Heaven, It shall be preached to every Nation, and Kindred, and Tongue, and People.* Whereas now, in many parts of America; and whereas now, in the whole Plat of the Regions; where the Mahometan Power is, and where

Antichrist

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Antichrist is, There is a concealment of this Gospel; a denial, a shutting of it up from the Acquaintance, and Knowledge, and Reading, and Hearing, of the generality of the People; it is here Preached in such a way, as to make known the great Counsels and Mysteries of the *Kingdom of Heaven* to Men. But,

In the *Second Place*: The *Kingdom of Heaven*, is in the mighty work and operation of the Gospel of Christ upon our Hearts. Then, when we find Christ to be the *Pearl of great Price*, and *sell all to buy him*; when we look upon him as the onely Treasure, and the onely Riches; when our Hearts are under the beginnings of Grace, and the powerful Operations of it; then is the *Kingdom of Heaven* come to be *within us*, Matth. 13. 31. *The Kingdom of Heaven is like to a grain of Mustard-seed, which a Man took, and sowed in his Field: which indeed is the least of Seeds; but when it is grown, is the greatest among Herbs, and becometh a Tree; so that the Fowls of Heaven lodge in the Branches of it.* This is an Expression of the Preaching of the Gospel; which, if it be received, and taken in, in the power of the Gospel upon the Heart, It is indeed, a little thing, in the beginning; but it spreads more and more upon the Heart and Life. And, the *Kingdom of Heaven* (ver. 33.) *is like unto Leaven, which a Woman took, and hid in three measures of Meal, till the whole was leavened.* This is the Preaching of the Gospel, and also the power of it upon the Hearts of Men. And when it is a Seed that takes upon hearts, and brings forth abundantly Fruit to Eternal Life, that also is the *Kingdom of Heaven*. And, ver. 44. *The Kingdom of Heaven is like treasure hid in a field, the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth, and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.* Again, the *Kingdom of Heaven* is like unto a Merchant Man, seeking goodly Pearls, who when he had found one Pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

This is the *Kingdom of Heaven* coming within a Man, giving him such a value of Jesus Christ, that he looks upon all things else, (as the Apostle saith) to be no better than dross and dung, in comparison of the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ. You know the World, how Ambitious it is of the Riches of Pearl; how desirous of the Glory, of the Lustre and Splendour that it gives to them, that wear it? Now when a Man counts Christ a Pearl beyond all value, beyond all Esteem, This is the *Kingdom of Heaven* (saith Christ) *within a Man*. It is not in Word (as the Apostle speaks) but in Power. It is the *Kingdom of God* in Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy

in the Holy Spirit, viz. The Righteousness of Christ, and that Joy, and Peace of Conscience that arises from it, by the Spirit of God applying it to our Hearts.

Now therefore, All the Time that we live here in the World, we should be gathering our selves into this *Kingdom of Heaven*; and to have the *Kingdom of Heaven within us*. That is indeed the *Oil in our Vessels*, when we have the very Spirit, and the very State of the *Kingdom of Heaven within us*.

I know that we are now in a State of Imperfection, and cannot rise up to the Glory of these Things, but yet in the Truth and Reality of it; every one that is fitted for the *Kingdom of Heaven*, he hath this value of Christ within him, this inward, sincere Love of Him, and Resignation of his Heart to Him; though it be not come into the Glory: Though this *Mustard-seed* hath not yet sprung up into all its Amplitudes, and into all its Greatness. This therefore apprehend within your selves; *The Kingdom of Heaven* (as Christ speaks) it does not come with observation, that Men should say, *Lo here, or lo there*; but (saith he) *The Kingdom of God is within you*, Luke 17. 21. He was demanded, *When the Kingdom of God should come?* (ver. 20.) And he answered, and said, *The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, Lo here, or lo there; for, behold, the Kingdom of God is within you*; So I say, we should look for Heaven within us. We can never go to Heaven (for that is but an Expression in Comparison) except Heaven come down now into our Hearts, and except we carry Heaven into Heaven, within our selves, within our Spirits. This (as I say) is that *Oil within our Vessels*, that will keep up the State of Heaven in us, and to us; not by any vertue of its own; but as it is a Grace given, and a Light given from that Supream Light; from that *Light* (as the Apostle John saith) *that lighteth every Man that cometh into the World*. Let us not therefore say, *Here, or there, is that Kingdom*; but let us look what we have of it in our selves. That is the *Lamp of Profession* only, when we speak of a Kingdom without us. That is the *Vessel fill'd with Oil* within; when we have this *Kingdom within us*. The *Kingdom of Heaven*, as it is a meer Profession, it is Separable from us; we may be parted from It, and It from us.

It shall be taken from you (as Christ saith) and given to a Nation bringing forth the Fruits thereof. So all the *Kingdom of Heaven*, in the profession of it, will be taken from them that have it, as the *Talent* was taken from the unprofitable Servant. That which we have (as Christ

Christ speaks) *is taken from us.* And therefore, if any of us say, O how excellent is it to hear, or to speak of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, or of the Kingdom of Heaven! It is our Great Delight. Then look to this, that you have it *within you*: For that *Outward Kingdom*, though you delight in it never so much, it shall be *taken from you*: As, *the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these*: And yet that Temple was taken from them. So it may be said, *the Kingdom of Heaven Are These*. But we must so hear, and so speak, and so converse, as having it within us; Else remember, the Kingdom will be taken from you; separated from you for ever, and you cast into that Kingdom of Darkness and Misery to all Eternity.

3. The *Third Expression* (with which I will shut up this Discourse concerning *the Kingdom of Heaven*). You must not think, that the *Kingdom of Heaven* lasts onely while you are in the present State; But the *Kingdom of Heaven* will be even throughout that Glory of its Appearance: And it is not seen, nor known like it self, till it be known in that *Glory*, and in the Separation which shall be between the *Wise*, and the *Foolish Virgins*, and between those that have had onely a Profession, and those who have had the Power: For, the *Kingdom of Heaven* hath its greatest Work, Its greatest Effect to shew yet upon every one of us: It never ceases to be a *Kingdom*, no not when it hath made this Separation between the one and the other; For then it takes into it those that are its own; and will throw out of it self those that tho they seem to be of it for a Time; yea when all things come into enquiry, into that Great Re-search; It shall be made known at that Day, that they did not indeed pertain to the *Kingdom*, who had it not within: Observe *Mat. 8. 12. The Children of the Kingdom shall be cast out into utter Darkness*. That is, they that have had this *Kingdom* in Perfection, but not the Power of it within them. So that I say, the great Manifestation of *the Kingdom of Heaven* is, when it comes to separate between the one and the other, and to have its own for ever within it self.

Observe therefore, *Matth. 13*. Our Saviour compares the *Kingdom of Heaven* to such kind of things, that still it may be known, that it is not a *Kingdom* in its Glory, till it comes to this Separation of things. We find *ver. 24.* saith our Lord, *The Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a Man that sowed Seed into his Field; But while Men slept, the Enemy came and Sowed Tares among the Wheat,*

Wheat, and went away. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit; then the tares appeared also. So the servant of the house-holder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good Seed in thy field? From whence then hath it tares? And he said, An enemy hath done this. The servant said unto him, wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said nay, let both grow together till the time of harvest; and in the time of harvest, I will say to the Reapers, gather you together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn. So you see here, that there is that great difference between the Kingdom of Heaven now, and the Kingdom of Heaven, as it shall manifest it self. It takes in Tares now, as well as Wheat. And so in the same manner, it is compared unto a Net, that drew in both good and bad into it self. But then it came to that, that the good are separated from the bad, and the bad are cast into a furnace of fire, where there shall be weeping and wailing.

And now I may say to you (in some humble measure) as Christ said to his Hearers; Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, yea, Lord. So I say to you, Have you considered, and received, and in good measure understood what I have been now speaking to you? That the Kingdom of Heaven sets out in the Preaching of it; But where it is not the Kingdom of Heaven within us, we have only a Lamp of Profession; And therefore, it will certainly come to that, That before the Kingdom of Heaven hath done, it will separate between one sort of Men and the other. The Tares shall be gathered into bundles to be burnt; and the bad Fish, though they have come to the Net, and come within the Net, yet they shall be separated, and cast into the furnace of fire.

This is the Kingdom of Heaven, and this is the same thing which our Saviour intends in this very Parable, I have Explained to you. The Kingdom of Heaven never ceases, till it hath separated foolish and wise Virgins. And therefore it is said, Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven: Which is a great Key to this Parable, in this 25th of Matthew. Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven. When do you think our Lord meant? He meant, at that very Time that was spoken of before, in the fore-going Chapter; and on this occasion, I would give you this Note in reading Scripture, that you may understand it; Observe, though we divide Chapters one from another; yet many times the Discourse of Christ goes on; it is the very same Sermon though in distinct Chapters. Now you shall find in the 46 verse, it is written, Blessed is that Servant, whom his Lord when he cometh, shall

find so doing. Verily I say unto you, that he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But, and if that evil Servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the Lord of that Servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour when he is not aware of; and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his Portion with the Hypocrites; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And then, at that very time, shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto Ten Virgins; who have indeed their time all along in the several Generations of Men, since the Resurrection of Christ; the Kingdom of Heaven hath been, and shall be in Motion (as I tell you) from the fulness of Time, till the fulness of all Times. And then, at the fulness of Times, it shall be likened unto Ten Virgins, Five Wise, and Five Foolish; Five taken into the Kingdom of Heaven for ever, and Five that are thrust out. That is, whoever they are, that are found Foolish Virgins.

For, certainly, to make the Parable more capacious, and to spread it the wider, for the observation and consideration of all, the Number is made equal; not that they are so in themselves; there are not equal Wise and equal Foolish: For, alas! the inequality is very great, in comparison; the Foolish mightily exceed the Wise, in the present State of things.

Though I make no doubt, there will be a different State, when the Kingdom of Christ opens it self; there will be many, and many brought to Christ. So that I make doubt, whether the number of those that shall be then brought into Christ, will not raise the number of the Saved, so as to exceed the other; but, I will let that alone. But what I now tell you is, That the Kingdom of Heaven will not cease till it hath made a Separation between one and the other: and so shine out in the midst of them that are taken into it: And, I might give you many great Expressions to this purpose; but the Parables in *Matth. 13.* are abundantly sufficient to shew you, That till the Lord of the great Harvest comes, The Kingdom of Heaven will not cease; and then there will be a Separation made of the one from the other.

I shall now shut up this great Doctrine, with Two close Applications.

1. That we would (First) receive this great Doctrine, this Thunder and Lightning, into our Consciences and Affections.

What?

What! hath our Lord said, That even those that are *Virgins* may be counted *Foolish*? even those that may be counted of the highest and purest Churches may be *Foolish Virgins*? The *Door* may be shut upon them? They may have *Oil in their Lamps* only in this World, but not able to bear up in this *Marriage-Supper of the Lamb*, wherein every one is to have his peculiar *Lamp* and *Oil*, to feed and nourish an exceeding Light and Flame of Purity, of Holiness. May *Virgins* have no *Oil* to supply at that time?

Oh then! with what serious Caution, Fear and Trembling, should I look back upon my self, and observe, whether my Profession hath the inward Riches, the intrinseck Value and Worth in it, or not? Whether there be *Oil* in my *Vessel*, as well as in my *Lamp*? Whether I have such a Holiness, as will bear out in that Glorious Appearance of Christ, and of his Angels, and of all his Saints with Him? Shall I not be put upon it in that Day, to run a begging, (as it were) for the *Oil* in my *vessel*?

Have we not Eaten and Drank, may we say, together at the Table of Christ? Have we not made Profession of Christ and the Gospel? Must we now be Separated from the real Saints and Servants of God? Have I only had that which would serve me to hear, and pray with in publick, and to receive the Lord's Supper? Have I only had that which is the Profession of the Reformed and Protestant Religion, and not the Power? And must I now be turned out from it, and take my Habitation amongst the foulest *Antichristian* Idolaters, and the worst of those *Superstitionists*? Nay, must I be turned out among the Heathen, among those that have been the profest Enemies of God, and Jesus Christ, and in a worse case than they?

These things, it is our Faithfulness, and love to our selves, and to our own Souls, to declare them to our selves, and to meditate upon them; and to search with great consideration into our selves, to know whether *Christ be in us of a Truth*? or whether we have the *Kingdom of Heaven* indeed within us? whether we are not running up and down with Observation, as Christ said, to say, where is the *Kingdom of Heaven*? Where is the true Light of the Gospel? Where is the best Profession, and the best Administration of Ordinances? And in the mean time, that I do not look for the Truth of Faith, the Truth of Repentance, the Spirituality of Knowledge, the power of Holiness upon my own Heart, and upon my own Life. Or that every one of us might make this use of it, to turn that Light

of Profession Inward, to search our own Hearts (as it were) with a Lamp lighting inwards, and with Candles, that we may know how it is with our own Souls. And then,

2. Let us look earnestly forward to that Appearance, to that Kingdom of Heaven, which our Lord hath hete presented to us; It is to come to another Being, to another Representation than is now. We see things now, but in a very dim and a dark Light: As I have often told you, we are in the foul, and in the dark place of the *Apo-
stacy* yet. The Time is near at hand, when every thing shall be seen in its full Light, and in its glorious Appearance and Representation.

And then, Though it is a Day of Terror to all wicked, profane, and dissolute Persons, under general Profession of Christianity. And though it be a terrible Day also to Virgins that have Oil in their Vessels; that is, who make a great deal of their Profession, and have no Truth of Grace; it will be terrible to them, when they come to find themselves so sadly benighted and darkened, in the very Heaven of their Profession; as the Expression is in the Prophet; Their very Lamp goes out in *obscure darkness*.

Yet it is a Day of Rejoycing, and a Day of Glory in it self. And what great Reason have we earnestly to pray, every one for our selves, and for them that are in such a dark and hopeles condition, that they have not so much as Lamps; even those that are under the Profession of Christianity, and yet are in such a case. Now, I say, in regard to the hopeles state of all those; and that we, who have a clearer Light of the Gospel breaking out, may have more of the power; We have Reason to pray for the Approach of that Time, when the *Kingdoms of this World*, shall be Proclaimed to be the *Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ*; When the Spirit shall be poured out upon us from on high; and the Everlasting Gospel shall be preached to every Nation, and Tongue, and People under Heaven. O! that our Hearts were earnest for this Time, and this State; and that our Souls would give God rest, till he come, and Rain Righteousness upon us; till he be pleased to open (as it were) the very Windows of Heaven, and to Rain down great Showers of Gospel-Truth, and Gospel-Grace and Peace, as He will do, before that Great, and Illustrious Day of the Lord come.

SERMON II.

On *Matth. XXIV. Vers. 1. and so on.*

Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto Ten Virgins, which took their Lamps, and went forth to meet the Bridegroom, &c.

I have begun to lay before you the great Importance of this Parable, and Reduced it to this Proposition, as a Foundation of Discourse on the Particulars;

That even the Purest, and most *Virgin-Profession of Christianity*, should look well to it self, and take great care, that it does not trust even in the best of Appearance of Things: I say, in the very best of Appearances; but that it should look to the inward Treasure, and the intrinick value of Christianity in the Heart.

Because here the *Foolish Virgins* were pleased with the *Lamp of Profession*, without the Treasure of *Oil in the Vessel*; and when it came to the great Up-shot and Result, their *Lamps* quickly went out; they failed, even in the very time; and so they were for ever shut out from the Glory, and the Joy, and the Happiness of the Solemnity of the Wedding.

Having laid out this Point in the Particulars of the Parable; I came to the first Particular, and that was to tell you, *That the Kingdom of Jesus Christ* is throughout, from first to last, *The Kingdom of Heaven*; whether you consider it in the Preaching of the Gospel, it is the opening of Heaven and of the great Counsels of the Eternal Wisdom of God in the Heavens; Or, whether you consider it, as it comes into the Heart of every particular Christian; so it is the power of Heaven, enabling them to set such a value upon Jesus Christ, that all the Things of the World are of no Account, compared with the *Pearl of Great Price*. Or, whether you consider it in the last Glorious Appearance of this Kingdom, so it is Heaven; It is not a State that doth so much as pretend to any Sensual Enjoyment, to any worldly Satisfaction; to any of the Grandeur of this World, or the Delights of it; but it is perfect Heaven; it is Heaven throughout. This I have spoken of, and so I shall not add any Thing to it.

I come to a Second Particular in This General; and that is, to let you know, from the Representation our Saviour hath here given; That the very Intent of Christianity, the Great Design and Purport of it is this; It is a Preparation to the Enjoyment of Jesus Christ; as the Great *Bridegroom* of our Souls, and as the *Bridegroom* of his Church. For so it is said here, *These Virgins They took their Lamps;* That is, As soon as ever they began to make a Profession of Christ, and a Profession of Christianity; Immediately, in that very moment, they had an Eye to the *Bridegroom*.

So that this is the Great Purport of Christianity, That we should have a Spiritual Marriage-Union with Jesus Christ; and in Order to the Enjoyment of him, in the Glory of his Kingdom, as the *Bridegroom* of our Souls. It is a very Great Emphasis and Weight that the Spirit of God has put upon this Resemblance, or Similitude of the Marriage-Union between Christ and the Soul, and between Christ and his Church.

And if I should be any thing able to declare and to open it to you at this Time, in the Spirituality of it, and thereby solicit, and draw the Affections of every one of us to Jesus Christ; I should in some measure Answer that which *John the Baptist* Represents, *John 3. 29. He that hath the Bride is the Bridegroom: but the Friend of the Bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's Voice. This my Joy therefore is fulfilled.* That is, There is no one, Preaching the Gospel, who ought to draw the Affection of Souls and of Spirits unto himself, but he is to look only to the Great *Bridegroom*; None of the *Friends of the Bridegroom*, That is, The Preachers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, They are not to draw the Hearts of Men to themselves. For what are they, as the Apostle saith (if they are the most Excellent) but *Ministers, by whom ye have believed?* But, as the Apostle saith, *We preach Christ Jesus the Lord; and our selves your Servants for Christ's sake: We preach Christ the Bridegroom, and our selves only the Friends of the Bridegroom.* And therefore every one should take heed, that there be no Centring in himself, (that speaks of Christ) but onely in Christ Himself. And so every one of us should take heed, that we do not Rest and Centre in an Ordinance, or in a Discourse of Christ; but that our Hearts go up to Christ Himself. For *he that hath the Bride is the Bridegroom: And the Friend of the Bridegroom rejoiceth when he hears the voice of the Bridegroom.* That is; when he finds that he speaks to any Heart, and draws any Soul to him. How Happy would

would it be, if in this Discourse the voice of the Bridegroom might be heard; and discovered in any of our Hearts; and that it might be known, that this Preaching of Christ hath prevail'd at all, upon any Soul! This is to Rejoice in hearing the voice of the Bridegroom, O therefore that this Joy might be fulfilled in you that hear, and in me that am speaking to you. But (as he goes on) *he must increase, and I must decrease.* That is, In all wherein we may seem to be serviceable to Christ, or serviceable to the Souls of Men, that must go off: And then the Kingdom and Glory of Christ Himself, that is It that must increase. And therefore for those that hear, and those that speak, to meet one another in that Great Solemnity, and in that Great Glory; and to find that all is gone off, but only Christ; How Glorious and how Blessed will at its State be!

I shall therefore endeavour to open this Great Point, in some measure unto you: Though I know it is not possible to speak of it as it is to be spoken of. But I shall therefore,

Firſt, Lay down this, as a Great Scripture Point, as a Great Scripture Truth; O how glorious is the Kingdom of the King of Glory!

Thus there is such a Marriage Union between Christ and his Church,
and between Christ and every particular Soul.

In the second place, I shall endeavour to shew you, wherein it stands at the present.

First, In the Opening of it, I shall shew you, That there is a State of it Now! And then,

That there is to be the Glory, and the Height of this State in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Therefore I shall endeavour to show you, wherein it stands now. And then,

In the third place, How the Glory of it shall break out; and in what Expressions the Scripture hath assured that to us: And therefore, that every one of us should look upon our Profession as a Fitting, and a Preparation to that Great Solemnity of the *Marriage Supper of the Lamb*.

I. The first Scripture by which I shall make it evident to you, is indeed a Scripture full of Mystery; full of Figure, of Metaphor and Emblem; and therefore it may not be strange to your Apprehension

It's that of the *Song of Solomon*; It is an hard thing almost to advise you to the Reading of it; because it lies hid under Veils; It lies hid under curious Allegories and Representations. But that is the very sense of it, Chap. 1. 3. *Thy Name is as Ointment poured forth;* there-

therefore do the Virgins love thee. Draw me, we will run after thee: The King hath brought me into his Chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in thee; we will remember thy Love more than Wine: the upright love thee, Ver. 3, 4. All this, it is but Metaphor, Representing Christ, as Drawing with the Savour of his Good Ointment: As Persons make themselves Acceptable by those things that draw and win upon the Sense, and so upon the Sense of Smelling. This Savour of his Good Ointment draws Souls to Christ. That is, those Rich, Spiritual Excellencies in Him, win upon the Souls of those that are indeed truly his, that are indeed *Virgins*; They draw the Love of Souls after Christ. The Pardon of Sin; His Righteousness; His Resurrection in the Power of it; His Death in the Power of it: His Life in the Power of it; The Glory of His Kingdom. These Draw Souls. *Draw me, we will run after thee.* And the upright love thee. All that have Sincerity in the Profession of Christianity, they truly love him.

And thus there is a Thread drawn throughout that whole Book, till it comes to the very Glory of the Kingdom of Christ. The last Words signify it; *Make haste, my beloved, and be thou like a Roe, or to a Young Hart upon the Mountains of Spices.* That is; The State of the Kingdom of Christ is just like a Mount of the most Aromatick, of the Sweetest Perfumes of Glory and Happiness. This is the first Scripture that lays this great Point down before us: And there are many Expressions, especially in that Evangelical Prophet, the Prophet *Isaiah*, comparing the Union betwixt Christ and his Servants to a Marriage; and to a Marriage that shall be solemnized, at last, in Glory.

But the second Scripture that I would give you concerning it, is *Ephes. 5.* Where the Apostle does draw, or delineate this very whole Representation before us, in the Beginning, and in the Perfection of it. And indeed, he introduces the very first Institution and Appointment of Marriage, to bring it all to this; That there was in it a much more Glorious Purpose, to prepare for, and to Represent the Union betwixt Christ and his Church. In speaking therefore of the Duty of Husbands to their Wives, he enters into this Great Discourse: saith he, *The Husband is the Head of the Wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church; and he is the Saviour of the Body. Therefore as the Church is Subject unto Christ, so let the Wives be to their own Husbands in every thing: And Christ, as an Husband (ver. 25.) He loved the Church, and gave himself for it; That he might sancti-*

He and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, That he might present it to himself a Glorious Church; not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. For indeed, (as I shall presently shew you, out of a Great Type of the Law of Moses, in this Thing) Christ takes those, whom he must Beautifie: He takes those whom he must every way fit for so great an Enjoyment as that of Himself: He takes them out of Corruption, out of Impurity and Defilement, in a Miserable, and Loathsome, and Captivated State and Condition: But he never leavestill he brings it to this; That he may present them to Himself; That he may take them to Himself, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. And then (saith he) for this Cause a Man shall leave his Father and Mother, and shall be joyned to his Wife; and they shall be one flesh.

This is a Great Mystery. But I speak concerning Christ and the Church. That is, Here lies the Mystery, the Great Point that I intend to present to you; that close Union that is betwixt Christ and his Saints. And it comes (as I told you) to that Gloty, that He presents it to Himself a Glorious Church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

And if you would know when this is; It is at the time of the Kingdom of Christ; at the time when he hath destroyed False Christianity; that Christianity that is called in the Professors, and Profession of it *The Whore*. When that is quite taken away; that is, when all False Christianity shall be driven out of the World, and forced out, by the Power, and by the Glory of Christ; Then shall be this Glorious Solemnity of the Marriage of Christ, Rev. 19. 1, 2. And so on in the Chapter.

And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in Heaven, saying, Allelujah; Salvation, and Glory, and Honour, and Power unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his Judgments; for he hath judged the Great Whore? What is the Great Whore, but only False Christianity, called, *Babylon the Great*, that hath defiled the Doctrine, and defiled the Worship, and defiled the Holiness of Conversation, and defiled the Spirituality of the Enjoyment of Christ. That's the meaning of the Great Whore. When therefore you see Christianity is All Spirit, is All Heaven, is All Life, is All Purity, and Truth, and Glory, and *Babylon* destroyed; when you see that, then Immediately shall the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb follow: As you shall find in the 7th Verse: Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the Marriage of the Lamb is come,

and his Wife hath made her self ready. And to her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine Linnen, clean and white: For the fine Linnen is the Righteousness of Saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true Sayings of God.

That you may not say as the World is ready to do; even the Sober World, even that which is the Professing World of Christians are ready to say, these things are nothing, but Whimsie, nothing but Fancy, it is said, *These are the true sayings of God.* To shew us, that the things shall certainly, and must needs come to pass: And it shall be, when *Christianity* shall be no longer in Form, and it shall be no longer in Rites and Ceremonies; when it shall be no longer in Humane Institutions, and Commands; and it shall be no longer in the shining Grandeur of the World.

For, Men cannot see the *Glory of Christianity*, because they see such a Glisten of this World: But all this must go off, and what is Glorious indeed must come in its place; It shall be all Spiritual, Pure, and Divine.

And, If any of us can Love such a *Jesus*, if we have such upright Hearts, and are drawn with the *Savour of His Good Oynments*, and such a *Name* as His, be to us, as *Oynment poured forth*; It is certain, our State is Good, we are of those upright, that do indeed Love Christ. But, If we say, Here's nothing of the Bravery of this World; Here's nothing of the Wit, and of the Pass-time and of the Gaudery, and of the Retinue, and what the World is so pleased with, and meeting together to talk of nothing, that signifies any thing, but shrivells into meer Emptiness, and into perfect Vanity, and Froth: I say, except we have these things, we don't know what to make of this *Jesus*, and of this *Christianity*. VVhy then, we are but *Foolish Virgins*, that while we pretend; we have nothing but a *Lamp*, and our *Lamp*, at the proper time for its shining in Glory will go out.

And, so suitably and agreeably to this (you may see, and I desire you may take notice of it, how *Scriptures* do agree, and Breathe the very same thing) The Apostle *John* in the *Revelation* speaks as *Solomon*, who lived many Hundred Years before *John*; yet they both came into the very same Spirit, and into the very same Representation. For, you see, that which *Solomon* Celebrates under a *Song of Marriage*, a *Song of Love*; The Apostle *John* does in the very same manner, Represent. I saw (saith he) *The New Jerusalem*
came.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins.

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come down, That is, the State of Saints, in this High, and Pure, and perfect Enjoyment of Christ. *I saw it come down as a Bride adorned for her Husband.* Chap. 22: 2. *I saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem.* Which is nothing, but the Pure, and Holy, and Perfect, and Happy State of Saints. *I saw it coming down from God out of Heaven, as a Bride adorned for her Husband.*

And now, the earnestness of all our desires should be after it. As it is said, (ver. 17.) *The Spirit and the Bride say, Come; And let him that heareth, say, Come.* That is, let them who hear say so; as struck with a *Symphony*, even as one Lute Answers another, the Lute upon the Wall, Answers that is struck, and Tuned, and Play'd upon: So every Soul Tuned aright by Grace doth sound alike, with the *Spirit* and with the *Bride*, when he does but hear it say *Come*; It immediately saith, *Come.*

Thus I have shew'd you, that this Allusion, Representation, and Figure, is a Figure Representing this great thing; Jesus Christ is the *Bridegroom* of the Church, and every Particular Soul the *Bride*, or *Lambs Wife*; For, it is a wild sort of Notion, that some People have of a Church: Who by it Principally mean a kind of Jurisdiction, and Authority, and Power, and a sort and sett of Men who should enjoy it; They mean this by the Church they speak so much of; Whereas the Spirit of God means by the Church chiefly Real Christians, sound, sincere-hearted Professors of Jesus Christ, and Lovers of him; *The upright Love thee*; This is the meaning of a Church by Christ, and not a kind of Authority and Jurisdiction, that looks more like a Train, and a Court of this World, than any thing of the power of *Christianity*, and the Power of the Gospel.

I shall therefore come, in proceeding in this Discourse, to open to you these two things.

First, That there is a State of this Marriage-Relation to Christ; understand every thing (as I hope you do) spiritually and of the Power of Holiness in our Hearts, and of the free Communication of the Righteousness, and Grace, and Spirit of Christ, Till all appears in Glory; understanding it thus, (I say) There are two great Spaces, Two Great States of it, one that is Here; and then the other, that shall be in the Glory of the *Kingdom of Jesus Christ*. And it hath pleased God to take great care, that both these should be Represented to us.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins.

First of all, the *State of the Soul here* ; It is like an *Esposal*, it is like a *Betrothing*, it is like that, that we call among us, a *Contract of Marriage*: And according to Scripture, there is a distance between it, and the Solemnity, and Compleating and Consummation of the Marriage. And this is very necessary for us to consider, that now is the time of preparing, and fitting Souls for that Great Solemnity ; And therefore we read of a *Virgin Betrothed* to an Husband, before the Solemnity of the Marriage ; upon which Account, to the *Jews* it was appointed by *Moses*, that there should be at least, Thirty days between the one and the other ; And they looked upon it, as a Breach, and an Infraction upon the *Mosaic-Law*, If there was not such a Time of Preparation ; And some very Conscientious Ministers of the Gospel have been of the Judgment, that there ought to be such a kind of Preparation ; And that it is agreeable to the Law of God, for the Wisdom and Decency of such a Solemnity as Marriage ; I shall not insist upon that. But it is very clear, that such a thing was in use among the *Jews*, and that the Law hath very great regard and respect to such a thing, and that the Scripture is drawn out in such a manner of Expression.

Now, It is nothing to speak of the Figure, that's not at all to my purpose ; But to let you know, that there is a Time of *Esposals* of Souls to Jesus Christ.

According to this, and to Ground the Allusion to you upon it ; we find, *Matth. 1. 18. The Birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise ; When as his Mother, Mary was Espoused to Joseph, before they came together : Before they came to dwell together, and to have the Marriage Solemnized, while she was his Spouse ; and so the Gospel History goes on ; So I say, there is an Espousal of Souls to Jesus Christ ; and that is in the present State, in the present State wherein we are under the Preaching of the Gospel ; wherein we are under the motions of the Spirit of Christ ; Here Christ begins, and he Sanctifies and Cleanses by the Washing of Regeneration, and by his Word, that he may present every Soul : There's the method of it, It begins here in a preparation ; And therefore we should consider, whether we are under this preparation now for Jesus Christ ; Whether our affections are drawn to him ; Whether we hear the Voice of the Bridegroom speaking to us ; Whether we have found the Savour of the Good Oynments of Christ ; and that it is not a Savour of Death, As the Apostle speaks, in that great Scripture 2 Cor. 2. 14. Now Thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh*

maketh manifest the Savour of his knowledge by us in every place. The Savour Ofme, that is the rich Perfume in every place, as in *Solomons Song*: saith he, *Because of the Savour of the good Oynments, The Virgins Love thee. And, draw me, and we will run after thee: Thy Name is Oynment poured forth*: Now the Apostle speaks just, as if he had taken his words out of that of *Solomons Song*; Saith he, *Who maketh manifest the Savour, or Perfume, the Odour, or perfume of the Knowledge of Jesus Christ.* For (saith he) *We are unto God a sweet Savour of Christ*, in them that are saved, and in them that perish; That is, whether Men are taken, and drawn, and persuaded by this Savour: Odour, or Rich Perfume, or not, it is all one. Suppose the Perfume does not go down into our Hearts, and into our Thoughts and Affections, yet it arises up to Heaven, and there it is accepted; If there be none of you, that hear, or, I that speak at this Time (Which I hope is far different) who find the Savour, and Excellency and Perfume of Christ, and of his Doctrine, and of the Knowledge of him; yet still this *Savour*, this *Odour* rises up to Heaven, and God is pleased with the Savour, tho we find nothing at all in it: But, saith he, we are to some a *Savour*, or *Odour of Death unto Death*: That is, if a Man saith, I find nothing, that you can say, offering the strong scent, and Knowledge of Jesus Christ; I do not find the Attractive, and VVinning Virtues and Powers of it; They do not at all prevail upon me: This is certainly unto Death; A Savour of Death, without Life, and unto Death: As it is said of natural Odours and Scents, that they wrap, and twist themselves about the Brain, and win upon the sensitive Power of a Man, and so they draw, and please, and allure. In the very same manner, the Knowledge of Christ; VVhen we hear of a Crucified Saviour, who dyed for our Sins, and to bring us out of this Misery and Ruine, it gives us the Savour, it wraps it self, and Twists, and Twines it self about our Minds, our Hearts, and Affections, and we cannot stir away from it, because it is so excellent, so desirable; Heres a *Savour of Life*; heres a quick, and a powerful *Savour*.

But now, on the other side, when Men find not, when they feel not any such thing; They say, this is a Dead Root; It hath not the proper scent of such a Root; and it is not such a Rich and an Admirable Oyntment, as you speak of; we find nothing at all in it. If we speak of Eating, and Drinking, and Buying, and Selling, and Riding out, and Enjoying and taking Pleasure, and having great

great Entertainments of Company; this we understand; But to say, Get into Christ; mind Him; get the Assurance of the Love of God in Him; Pardon of Sin in Him: We find nothing in this: It is a Dead Savour; Why then (saith the Apostle) *It is to Death*: It argues all is *to Death*.

Or, in another comparison, if we should bring (as Physicians say) a strong Suffumigation to the Nostrils of a Person that is in a dangerous state (as the way is, to bring strong Scents just under their Nostrills; those that are proper to stir up the Brain): and no Effect follows; This is to Death; The man is a Dead man. So when Christ is brought, and the Doctrine of his Salvation, to a Soul; and there is nothing at all of Worth, Effect or Efficacy, This Death is unto Death; Just as such a kind of Suffumigation brought to a Dying Person, and no Effect, argues, That he'll die presently, if the strongest Savours and Perfumes have no Effect, and the Brain is just ready to be laid asleep in Death.

So Conscience, and Inward Sense, which God hath planted in a man, in order to Spiritual Life, if they stir not at the Savour of Christ, it argues a person left of God, and he is under the Doom and Sentence of Death: If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them who are lost.

Further, To Represent the main Point we are upon, to you, to shew you in what a State we are now, give me leave to make use of a Type, in the Law of Moses, in this Thing; because it doth greatly Represent it; and I make no doubt, it was intended to this very purpose that I am now speaking of. It is said, *Deut. 21. 10. When thou goest forth to war against thine Enemies.* (I desire you to take notice, that I speak only of it, by way of Allusion, and as a Type of this Thing). *When thou goest forth to war against thine Enemies, and the Lord thy God hath delivered them into thine hands, and thou hast taken them captive; and thou seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and hast a desire unto her, that thou wouldest have her to thy Wife: Then shalt thou bring her home unto thine house, and she shall shave her Head, and pare her Nails; And she shall put off the Raiment of her Captivity from off her, and shall remain in thine house, and bewail her father and her mother a full month, &c.*

From which it may appear, (as I told you before) That God did ordain, and appoint under the Law, That there should be Thirty Days between the Contract of Espousals, and the Marriage. Such Time there was at least to be, and especially in the case of a *Captive*.

But

But here is the Thing that I intend:

We are all *Captives*, in a lost, and in an undone condition, in a ruined state; And therefore, if Christ hath a desire to any of our Souls, in Grace, and Mercy, and Pity, and Compassion; there passes such a kind of Preparation, such a kind of fitting of us, for such an Union to Jesus Christ; There is a *Shaving of the Head*, and a *Paring of the Nails*; That is, the taking away of the Innate Superfluity of Lust by Regeneration, the changing of the unholy, and unspiritual, and unheavenly Temper of Heart and Mind, by Regeneration flowing from the Blood of Christ; That it may be brought into a nearness, and suitableness to Enjoy Christ: And there is the appointment of a Month, there is an appointment of Time of Preparation, wherein the Souls of his *Servants* are daily wash'd in his Blood, and in the *Chrystal Sea* before the *Throne*; They generally walk with him, and find a Suitableness, and an Agreeableness between Christ, and them; till they come to say, they would never be separated any more from him. They desire to be joyned to him in an *Everlasting Covenant* (as it is said in the Prophet *Jeremy*) that should *never be forgotten*; They desire to forget all that, that they were used to, and united to before; and to be given up wholly and entirely to Jesus Christ.

Now, as it was under the Law; If any Woman being Espoused to a Husband, did violate the Covenant of the Espousals, and the Contract of the Espousals; They were to dye for it. The Woman and the Man, that did so violate the Covenant of the Espousals; Both the Man and the Woman were to dye, according to the Law of God, by *Moses*; even as if the Espousals had been fully, and compleatly consummated, by Marriage; There was no Difference in that Case between the one and the other.

So I say, if now, in the Time of our Espousals, when we are under a Profession of Christ, under a Profession of his Name, his Gospel, and Salvation by him, if our Hearts be not true, and entire to him, and given up wholly to him; Our Condemnation will be as Great, nay, it will be greater, than of the Heathen, than those of the unbelieving World, of those that deny Christ; of those that we call *Anti-Christians*, or Professors at large; It will be greater Condemnation, because we violate the Love of our Espousals.

Here's the great Wisdom of God, in Representing this thing to us; that we may know how to behave our selves, and give up our selves,

selves, to Christ, and to devote our selves to him, in this State of our Espousals.

In *Psalm*. 45. You have an admirable Representation of this, under *Pharaoh's Daughter*, that was an *Egyptian*, Married to that great Prince of the God of *Israel*, of the God that made *Heaven and Earth*; VVhere it's said, *ver. 10. Hearken, O Daughter, and consider, and encline thine Ears, forget also thine own People, and thy Fathers House*; So shall the King greatly desire thy Beauty, for he is thy Lord, and Worship thou him: The Kings Daughter is all Glorious within, her Cloathing is of wrought Gold, she shall be brought unto the King in Rayment of Needle-Work; The Virgins the Companions that follow her, shall be brought unto thee: With gladness and rejoycing shall they be brought; They shall enter into the Kings Palace. Instead of thy Fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make Princes in all the Earth; And so the *Psalm* goes on in that same kind of Representation; which is chiefly intended of Christ, and his Church, of Christ and the Soul.

Therefore, I say to you, I say to every one; *Hearken O Soul! Hearken, O Soul, and consider; Forget thine own People, and thy Fathers House*; That is, Forget that State of Sin, and Vanity, and of the VVorld; All that thou derivatest from the First Adam thy Father, forget it all; So shall the King greatly desire thy Beauty; for he is thy Lord, and Worship thou him. And if any thing seem valuable to us in this VVorld; Let us forget it all, that we may give up our selves to our Espoused King. Ay, but how shall I leave my pleasures? How shall I leave this and that Enjoyment, this and that Relation that are so dear to me? VVhy, saith the Spirit of God, *ver. 16. Instead of thy Fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make Princes in all the Earth, I will make thy Name to be Remembered in all Generations, therefore shall the People praise thee for ever and ever.*

That is, there shall be a great Recompence to every one, that leaves this VVorld, and the things of it, in their Affections, to devote and give up themselves to Christ. *Instead of thy Fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make Princes in all the Earth.* Thou shalt have Recompences enough; And thou shalt be Praised for ever and ever. The Graces, the Priviledges, the Enjoyments shall be great, and thou shalt be Glorious for ever.

If therefore we could hearken, and encline to the Terms of Jesus Christ, if we could be willing to shave our Heads, and to Pare

our Nails, and to put off the Garments of our Captivity. The King would desire our Beauty: Nay, indeed, He Loves, and Does all this for us, and makes us willing to have it all done. For a Spiritual Captivity is loved, while a Bodily Captivity is hated. We love the Garments of a Spiritual Captivity, even our Lusts and Pleasures, and Worldly Enjoyments, which are the Garments of our Captivity; and They are so precious to us, we cannot Naturally endure to part with them, to be clothed with change of Rayment, when Jesus Christ, the Great Husband and Spouse of our Souls is offered to us: And This Perpetuates our Captivity.

And thus I have made use of the Similitude, because the Scripture is so very admirable, and abundant in it.

I'll offer you One Scripture more, and so pass on to the Second Particular. *Hosea 2.* God there compares his Church, and so every Soul, to an Impure and Adulterous Woman, that follows after her Lovers: But, saith God in the 6th Ver. *Therefore behold, I will hedge up thy way with Thorns, and make a Wall, that she shall not find her paths. And she shall follow after her Lovers, but she shall not overtake them: And she shall seek them, but she shall not find them: Then shall she say, I'll go and return to my first Husband, for then was it better with me than now. Therefore (saith God in the 14th Verse) I'll allure her: That is, I'll speak to her very heart. And I'll bring her into the Wilderness, and I'll draw her, and speak every way to her heart. And then in the 19th Verse, I'll betroth thee unto me for ever: Yea, I'll betroth thee unto me in Righteousness, and in Judgment, and in loving kindness, and in mercies.* All this indeed, hath a peculiar Relation to the Church of Israel: But it is true of every Soul, and of every Spirit, that Christ speaks to, and draws to love him, as its Husband, and Spouse: He doth allure, and speak to their Hearts, He doth hedge up their way; If God see that any of His love the World, or Relations, or any Thing better than himself, He'll hedge up their way; They shall not find their way.

Thus you see there is a Time of Preparation, wherein Christ is fitting, and preparing, and drawing the Soul to Himself.

2. In the Second Particular I will enlarge a little further upon this Point of our *Espousals*, and draw to a conclusion; and therein shew you, That we may all discern wherein, and whereby the Soul is thus drawn to an Union with Jesus Christ, to this Spiritual Union with him.

In the first place, it is by the Soul seeing, and finding that it is in a miserable, and a Lott, and a Captivated condition without him; When it comes to find it self in the Hands of Justice, In the Hands of Divine Wrath, and Indignation: When it finds it self in all its Impurity, and in all its Unholiness without Him, it comes then to desire him, to receive his offer, to unite with him. Now, this is not onely by way (as some, it may be, have insisted upon it) by way of preparation, but it runs throughout all the present State. A true Christian is continually looking upon himself, as a Captive; It is not a thing of preparation onely, But it flows out from the Efficacious Grace and Spirit of the Lord Jesus; That every Soul that is thus united to Christ, it finds, it does not know what to do with it self without him; Nor that it is onely drawn by fear, but (as I shall presently tell you, tho very Briefly) it is drawn by Love to him. But I say, because we are Captives, because we are brought out of another Land; a Land of Darknes, a Land of Impurity, a Land not suitable to the Land of Promise; because we are brought out of that, Therefore there must be a continual consideration of the necessity, that lies upon us: And it is not Derogatory to our Love of Christ, or to the Grace of Christ, that our first State, being a Captivated State is known to us to be such a Captive State; And therefore to be made Free by such Rich Grace, as that the Great Prince and Lord of Life should have a desire to us, that he should look upon that of his own Grace, which is all the Beauty that is in any, that God hath Loved them with an Everlasting Love; the Beautiful Person is onely he, that God hath from an Eternal free Love, and Grace (when we were all together lost and undone in our selves) look'd upon, and made his Time, in the proper season of being brought home to him, tho we are found in all our Impurities, *To be the Time of Love.* How great is it!

Now, when any one of us is under this Grace of God, Jesus Christ looks upon us; He beholds the choice of God, he beholds the Love of God upon us; And such a one is as a Beautiful Person in his Eye: And so he takes care to *Shave the Head*, and to *Pare the Nails*, and to *change the Garments of Captivity*, and to bring him home to himself. This I say, it is not preparation Hammered out, and Anvill'd by our own strength, Povver, or Consideration; but it is a first Davvn of the Grace of Christ, of the Love of Christ, through the Election and Choice of God upon us.

Here

Here is the very Beginning of all things. For, as I said to you out of Ephes. 5. Christ Loves the Church first of all; and then he Sanctifies it, and Washes it with the Word, and with the Regeneration of his Word, and of his Spirit. He first of all Loves it, and Loves the Church, and gave himself for it. His Love is like the first Love of Espousals, of drawing the Soul into a Condition, and State of Espousals to himself. And to be Sanctified and Washed with Water, and Regenerated, and Renewed it, and takes away the Prison-Garments, the Captive-Garments, which it may be, look beautiful to those that are yet Enslaved. They look upon all the Enjoyments and Pleasures of the World, to be the greatest Bribery. But now, when Christ comes to show them what their State is, then they come to cry out, at the first, and so ever after, as the Apostle, Rom. 7. 24. *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from this Body of Death?* And you see, he speaks of it in the very same Language, (Gen. 22.) *I see neither David my Master, nor any against the Law of my mind; and bringing me into Captivity to the Law of Sin, which is in my Members.* It is a continuing sense on every Soul in Christ.

2. The second thing wherein this is shewed, is in drawing the sincerest, and Purest, and Chastest Love of the Soul unto Jesus Christ. When Christ, by his Spirit, (in his word), and by the *Friend of the Bridegroom*, that is, by the Preaching of the Word of Christ, when he draws the truest affections of Souls to himself; Shewing his Love to them, in the Pardon and Forgiveness of Sins, He draws their hearts entirely, and unitedly to himself. He does therefore, first of all, (as it were), put the Soul the Wedding-Garment of his own Righteousness. He sends it a Robe, a Vest, from himself, of his own Righteousness, and of the sanctification of his own Spirit. And this enkindles, and enflames the Love of the Soul unto Jesus Christ. The Apostle speaks in this Language, in the 1. Cor. 13. 1. *Would to God you could bear with me a little, &c. For I am jealous over you with a Godly Jealousie. For I have Espoused you as one Husband, that I may present you a chaste Virgin to Christ.* The Preaching of the Gospel, and the drawing of Souls, it is the Espousal of them to our Husband, and presenting them a Chaste Virgin. That is, with undefiled, and Inviolable affections to Jesus Christ. When the Love of the Soul is thus drawn to him, united to him, *The upright*, as I said to you before, *Love him.* And when once this Love of the Soul to Jesus Christ is indeed kindled, where it is

sincere, and indeed kindled to him. O how strong, and how vehement is his Love! It is true, it is from the Love of Jesus Christ made known to it: Even as you know, Love draws and wins Love back again upon it self.

This is admirably set out to us in the eighth Chapter of the Song of Solomon. *Set me (saith she) as a Seal upon thine Heart, as a Seal upon thine Arm. Let the Love of Christ be to me so, as if he set me as a Seal upon his Heart, as a Seal upon his Arm.*

This is the greatest Indenture, the strongest obligation and uniting of the Lord Jesus Christ to the Soul, and of the Soul thereby to him again: for then, Love is as strong as Death, and is as cruel as the Grave; The seals thereof are coals of Fire, which hath a most vehement Flame; Many Waters cannot quench Love, neither can the floods drown it: If a Man would give all the substance of his House for Love. That is, to buy that Love off from Christ. That's the meaning of it; If a Man would give all the Substance of his House, where Love is once fixed, to draw it off, It would utterly be contemned. Now this we should look to, whether we have such a chaste, and Inviolable Love to Jesus Christ; That all the substance of the World would be utterly contemned? whether Christ hath *Set us as a Seal upon his Heart, and Arm?* It is impossible then, it should ever be taken off.

3. The third is this, when once we come to be thus united to Christ, in the Chastity and Purity of our Affections, in the sense of his Love to us, and our Love to him. Immediately there follows, and all along there follows a Self-Relinquishment, and Obedience; And it cannot be otherwise. For Love from a worthy Person hath a great command over those that are Loved; It hath a mighty command on the Persons Loved to engage to Love again; So that they are willing to do any thing; to give up themselves to the will of the Person that Loves, and is Loved upon his Love first. And this is most due indeed to our Lord Jesus Christ; Because he is the most excellent of all that can be proposed to us; And he hath Loved us, and Washed us in his Blood; And he thus wins us to his own Holiness; Eph. 5. Saith the Apostle, *the Church is Subject unto Christ, as unto the Head, the Saviour of the Body.* It is in a perfect compliance with the Holy will of God.

Object. If you'll say, But how can we say this? We find many Imperfections in our Obedience, many Murmurs in our Hearts.

loyal to Jesus Christ, and are not at all according to the Obligations that lie upon us.

Answer. Because we are going on to perfection in this state, and because we find that we are under a Degree of Captivity, and not perfectly freed; Therefore the Soul cries out earnestly for the coming of the Great Bridegroom.

I shall but make Two or Three Expressions of Application, and so conclude this Point.

In the First Place, I beseech you, that you would consider what your Christianity is: If it be not so strict an Adherence of your Souls and Affections to Christ, as every wise, and prudent, and good Husband requires and expects from his Wife: I say, if it be not so, how is it possible that you can say, That Christ is mine, and I am his? And therefore look well to it, and have a Jealous Eye, as the Apostle said, *I am Jealous over you with a Godly Jealousie*; So we should be All Jealous over our own Hearts, and the Motions of our Eyes, to see whether there be such a Faithfulness to Jesus Christ, as ought to be: When the Church is Subject to Christ, (as the most Excellent and Virtuous Woman, and Wife, is to the most Honourable and Worthy Husband;) There is not any thing then, that can, or ought, or is possible to come between our Souls, and Jesus Christ.

And, If we cry out, Alas! We are not able hereunto, we do not find this.

I shall after, by the Grace and Assistance of God, press upon you; Every such Discovery of the remaining defection and falleness of our hearts, It should make us cry out earnestly, *Come thou Beloved of my Soul*; That there may be an entire and a perfect Union between me and thee; Between thy self and my heart. This, it should make us weary of the World, and weary of Life, and weary of the present State; We cannot find our hearts come up, as we desire they should. But in the mean time, there is a True, and a Real, and a Substantial Faithfulness, and Purity, and Chastity of Affections towards Christ in every Soul that is His: That tho there are things that do not look so Resigning to Christ, as they should do, and so perfectly compliant; Yet the Spirit is United to him: As the Apostle speaks by way of Allusion to this very thing, in the 1 Cor. 6. latter end. *But he that is Joyned to the Lord, is one Spirit.* That is, in regard of the present State of Flesh and Blood, there will be some Wandrings of Heart; But the Spirit is Steadfast and Jealous over those

those Unholy and Impure motions towards Sin, Flesh, and the World, and it gathers it self back, and it humbles it self; And it bewails it self, in regard of the *Trasgressions* of the Flesh, and corrupt part, wherein it does any way behave it self unworthily towards *Jesus Christ*, that Saviour of it self; *He is the Saviour of the Body*, and therefore the *Church is Subject to him*. And then,

2. In the Second Place; It should teach us very vehemently, to look and cry out for that Time of free and full *Enjoyments of Christ*. I wonder we should not be earnestly desirous, when I consider the Reason, the necessity, and the great obligation which lies upon us; I wonder, we are not more earnest to dye, and to be with Christ; we are apt to think there is a State of the World ordained, wherein we should have such, and such *Enjoyments*, and bear up our selves for a Time; While in the mean time, we forget *Jesus Christ*: But hereafter, it will be endeavoured to be made plain, in this Discourse, that either to go out of the Body, and to be with *Jesus Christ* in Spirit; Or to have the whole frame of this World unpinn'd and dis-joynted one part from another; That there may come that *Glorious Kingdom of Jesus Christ*, and that *Marriage of the Lamb*, and coming down of that *New-Jerusalem*; (And our selves as a part of it) as a *Bride adorned for her Husband*, is the inward Groan of every Saint. These things should be sweet to us: And we should not be Gulp'd down by the present *Temptations* of the World, which have so much force, because our hearts are not steady to Christ; O Let us look earnestly for that Love, which many *Waters cannot quench*, nor the *Flouds drown*.

And, If we find, that we cannot be, as we would be; We should therefore cry out, *Make haste, O Beloved; And appear upon the Mountain of Spices*: That we may be for ever quiet, and Pure, and Un-interrupted in our Love unto thee, and receiving thine upon us.

S E R.

S E R M O N I I I.

On *Matth. XXV. Ver. 1. and so on to Ver. 13.*

Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto Ten Virgins, which took their Lamps, and went forth to meet the Bridegroom.

I Have entered into this Great Parable of the *Kingdom of Jesus Christ*: And to shew you, That the *Kingdom of Christ* is from the very Beginning, to the End of it, *The Kingdom of Heaven*: And that the Principal Point of the Kingdom, as Now, is, *The Espousing of the Spirits of his Saints unto Himself*: That in the Glorious Solemnity of the *Marriage of the Lamb*, They may be Bidden to that *Marriage-Supper*: As the Expression is in the *Revelation*.

I shall now go on, as I intimated to you the Last Day, to shew you, That *This Preparation for the Marriage, or for the Union with Christ, in that Great Glory and Solemnity of his Kingdom, is Now*: And all Christianity looks to That: I say, It looks to that Glorious Solemnity. The Preparation is begun Now, and then is the Glorious Solemnity. But in the Time of the Preparation, in the very present Time, the Souls and Spirits of the Servants of Christ, move with an Earnest Desire towards that Glory. They are, They ought to be moved to a desire of the Glory of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. And All our Religion, All our Christianity, All our Praying and Hearing, and Preaching, All the Graces that we Labour after, our Faith and Repentance, our Holiness, our Obedience; All these, they are to be Erected, they are to be lifted up, to be raised up to the Glory, and to the Kingdom of Jesus Christ; So that we ought to have an Eye in Every Thing, to that State: For so you see it is here said, *Ver. 1. There were Virgins going forth to meet the Bridegroom. They took their Lamps, and they went forth to meet the Bridegroom.* Though the *Bridegroom* delayed his coming, and did not come so soon as they might think, yet still they went forth to meet the *Bridegroom*. All True Power of Grace and Holiness, and (as we speak) of Religion; To be Religious; It is to go forth to meet the

the Bridegroom: This is the Great Sense of it. Not that we shall be perfect here, in any Regard; But our Perfection is in that Kingdom and Glory of Christ: It is in that Solemnity: And therefore it is our Great Mistake, if we lay our Christianity lower than This; If we don't Elevate, and Lift it up to This very Great Point, to *meet the Bridegroom*: Our *Lamp*, (that is, our Profession, and our Dealing in Christianity now, and in all the Ordinances of it, and in all the Graces of it) is to this very purpose, That we might be Daily *meeting of the Bridegroom*; That we might be fit to *meet the Bridegroom*, and might bear up with the Glory, Greatness and Excellency of that Solemnity.

I spoke to you the Last Day, of the *Captive Person*, that appeared Beautiful in the Eyes of Him *that had taken her captive*: And, if it was so, that he desired to Espouse her, she was to abide *Thirty Days before the Marriage*. That is, There was to be a Time of Preparation. But now, I beseech you to consider, All that very Time which we read of, in *Deut. 21. 10*. *Her Head was to be shaven, and her Nails to be pared, and the Rayment of her Captivity was to be taken off from her; and she was to continue in the house of him that loved her; and to bewail her Father, and her Mother, a full month*. That is, Because she was taken *Captive*, and taken from her nearest Relations; and was thus to be *washed, and her Head shaven, and her Nails pared*. She was to be under such a Preparation all that full Month, because a Pagan, a *Stranger from the Commonwealth of Israel*: As I said to you, in the Expression of *David*: *Forget thine own People, and thy Father's House*: So Christ gives us a Time of Preparation, a Time of *shaving our Heads, and paring our Nails, and taking off the Garments of our Captivity*, of our Corrupt and Impure State: We have a *Month for this*: That is, such a Time as God allows his *Servants* here in the World; and such a Time as his *Church* hath before the Glory of the Nuptials, of the Wedding, and of his Kingdom. And they are all this Time to bewail that State, that lost and undone State, wherein they are by Nature: And all that Time now, that such *Captives* were under this *Months Delay*, under this *Months Preparation*; Undoubtedly, they had a Great Respect to the Honour, and to the Glory of the *Nuptial Solemnity*; they did every thing with an Eye to that, and with an Order to that: And if it had not been so to be Accomplished; All the Intention, All that was meant by that of *shaving the Hair, and paring the Nails, and taking off the Garments of Captivity*, had been to no pur-

purpose, she had been turned out again, and been a Slave for ever. All these methods had been in vain; But because there was so Honourable an Intention, as that of Marriage; That made all this easy and sweet, and there was an Eye to it all along. In the very same manner, if we have not an Eye to the Wedding; IF we Love and Desire to stay in the State on Earth, and not to come to the Honour of the Nuptials, to be the *Bride* and the *Spouse of Christ*; We lay all our Religion and Profession too low.

And therefore, I shall desire to discourse this Point to you so, as may move you most to draw up your hearts, not to a Christianity, as it is now, but as it shall be in Glorious Solemnity of the *Marriage of the Lamb*: And to teach you, that our Eye is to be all along upon that, and to discover to you the Greatness of the mistake, in doing otherwise, I shall therefore discourse these Heads upon it.

First, To open to you, what it is to be a Christian, and to be Religious, and to be Godly, as we usually speak, with an Eye to that future State, to that Glorious State of the *Wedding* of our Lord Jesus, And of our selves to be Married in Glory to Him. And then,

In the Second Place, I shall shew you the Great Reasons, why this, and nothing else, is the Truth and Reality of Christianity. And then,

In the Third Place, I'll shew you how it hath come to pass, that this great Aim and Designation of Christianity is fallen so very low, as it is in the World. And then,

In the Fourth Place, I will Answer Objections to you by which you may seem to think, or it may seem to you, that this is not so necessary, and absolutely needful Doctrine, as I hope it will appear to you; And then,

In the Last Place, I'll close with the application of it.

First therefore, I begin to explain it to you, what it is to order our selves so, as if there was nothing to come after, or as if we did not care how long the *Month of Preparation* and *Purification* were drawn out; And what it is in every thing to have our hearts raised and lifted up to this excellent end, to this Glorious Point and Conclusion of the *Marriage*.

First therefore, you must consider, that we are all naturally upon this, to fix a State here in this World; I say, we are naturally upon this, to fix a State, as much as we can here in this World; We

would have the Interest of this World to stand ; We would have *Buying and Selling, and Planting, and Building, and Marrying, and Giving in Marriage* ; We would have these things continue, and the Breeding up of Children for it, in successive Generations ; And we never care nor desire to have an End of this ; but we would have the World go on, and we desire to live as long in it, every one of us, as we can ; And to have as much Interest in it, to have as much Enjoyment of it, to have as much of the Riches, and of the Grandeur, and of the Honour, and of the Pleasure, and of the Enjoyment of it, as we can : This is natural to us.

But now, when we come to raise our Christianity indeed ; We are not so much upon this World, but our Great thought is, concerning the future State, the future Kingdom, and the future Glory : We are looking beyond this, we are dealing with this World, as that that must wane, that must Decrease and Decay, and we desire it should : We have inspected it ; We have weighed it, and found it *too Light* every way ; And therefore we cannot be content with it ; But we are weary of the stay, and of the delay of it.

When we go forth indeed, with our *Lamp* to meet the *Bridegroom*, We do thus ; I say, we do thus. It is true indeed, we all profess this ; We pretend to it ; It is the very necessary obligation of our Profession, to do thus, and to say, and to carry it before all, that we do thus : But now, if you do but attend, and hearken to the whispers of your own hearts, and to the discourses that are in the VWorld, and that we have one with another, You may plainly find, we desire, that the VWorld should be *Eternal*.

It is noted to be the great mistake and deception of some natural Phylosophers, that they believed, the VWorld was *Eternal*, was from Eternity ; That it was always ; And so it is an *Eternal VWorld*, as they speak a *Parte-Ante* ; From the former part of it, it hath been always : And, Indeed, it is as Great, and as Ruinous a mistake in point of Practice, that we desire the World should be for ever, that it should continue for ever in this very State, wherein it is. It is true indeed, it is a very Atheistick Principle, to think, that the World was from Eternity ; And it would follow, if so, that it must be to Eternity. But, I am not minding that Point now, but only allude to it ; That as they thought the World was from Eternity, So we desire it should be to Eternity. And, it is as strange a thing to us, to be made to believe the End of the World, and the End of the State of things, with any Definitiveness, or with any certainty.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins.

4.

as it was to the *Jews*, when they came to understand that Christ did not intend an immediate Kingdom, in their *Jewish* State, and in that present World. This present World is so exceeding Natural to us, That you see Men Purchase, as if the World was still to last Ages: And who knows when it shall have an End? And therefore Men desire to Propagate all the Worlds concerns, even to Perpetuity.

But now, when a Christian comes indeed to consider; He always sets the Bounds by his own thoughts to the World, he sets Bounds to the present Condition, by Powerful and Effective thoughts of Eternity. Saith he, this World is not to last, I must deal with it, as with a World that is not to last.

Observe how the Apostle speaks: Indeed, I might give you many abundant Scriptures, to shew you how much their thoughts were upon the End of things; *The End of all things is at Hand*. And the Apostle *John* tells us, the *Fashion*, the *Scheme* of this *World* passeth away. And, in *1 Cor.* Chap. 7. That I would desire you to consider of; Saith the Apostle, *Time is short*: And it shall come very speedily to that; *That they that Marry should be as if they Married not; And they that Weep, as tho. they Wept not; And they that Laugh, as if they rejoiced not; And they that buy, as if they possessed not.* Ver. 29. Now this indeed, was spoken Sixteen Hundred Years ago; But we are now, as unwilling to believe, that time is shorter, as any could be in those Days; And are as tender, that any one should meddle with such a Point, that the present State should be at an End: And every one desires Life, in his own particular; is afraid of dying, and afraid of Growing old, of growing near to the Grave; It is a very Melancholy prospect, (as we say) a Melancholy discourse, any thing that looks to this point.

But now, our going forth to meet the *Bridegroom*, it must be much otherwise; We read that the time is short; And the *V*World continually passing and fleeting away; Therefore remember indeed, what you pretend to, whether you do it, or not; That you may bring your selves to the very thing, to do it; that is, that you are daily going out *To meet the Bridegroom*.

For, on this other side; A Servant of God, he looks (as I may say) Bolt upright; he lifts up his head, he raises up himself, to look up to that *World to come*, whereof (saith the Apostle) *We speak*, our Discourse is of that. *V*We look Bolt upright to that, we desire to get above this *V*World, and to call for, and pray for, and Covet that State of the *World that is to come*. It is indeed, so great an Expressi-

on of the Apostle Peter, that I shall only make use of that, in this present Case, and so pass on. 2 Pet. 3. 12. Saith the Apostle, *Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the Day of God*; VVhen we are in haste, that that day should come; This is to go forth to *meet the Bridegroom*, when our earnest desires are to that.

VVe Love all the Exchangings of this Life, the variety of the spending of our Time in it; So much in sleeping, so much in Eating and Drinking; So much in Dressing; So much in Buying and Selling; So much in visiting, and going about to talk of things, that are of no moment. But now, a Christian goes out with his *Lamp* to *meet the Bridegroom*: Even a Foolish Christian pretends to this, But a VVise Christian really doth it. And therefore, what cause have we to consider this? To be ashamed, that we bear the Glory of this no more?

A Second Particular, in which I'll open it to you. A Man that is a Christian, (But only a *Foolish Virgin*) he considers how much Religion will serve the present Turn, the present Case.

For, you know (and it is very evident) that the VVorld can be no more without Religion, than it can be without Meat and Drink, and without Light; I mean, some form, or some way of Religion; All Nations, and all Persons have found some kind of necessity of it; For, first of all, we don't know how to put out that natural Light, that is in every Man's Conscience; All the wit that ever has been in the VVorld, and the sharpest Atheistical Reason, could never prevail to this, to cast it out of the humane Understanding and Conscience.

A Man may cast it out of Practical Conscience; But he can never cast it out of that Intellectual, Convicting and Convincing Conscience: Now, because we must, and would have some peace in our selves; VVe must have some Religion; Or else Conscience will grumble, and be disquiet, and out of Ease, and out of Temper, if there be nothing to Lull it, and satisfy it, that there is some sort of Religion in Men. And then, Governours, and Rulers, even down to Masters of Families, they find a necessity of Religion to Govern Mankind: It would not be Governed, if there were not some Awe, and Power of Religion upon Men; If there were not some Discerning of Good and Evil. So this brings something more of Religion still. And then,

VVhen Laws of Nations come to make Religion a Fashion, and to make it a thing (as we speak) Establish'd by Law; Then there comes

comes a further necessity ; For, if a Man does nothing in Answer to this ; He is look'd upon, as a kind of a *Bouresen*, one that disturbs the world ; And, Indeed, it is the greatest Disturbance to a Nation, to deny Religion ; To deny the Being of a God ; To deny the Distinction between Good and Evil. And then,

Men have hope that God will Bless them, when they are Religious ; And therefore, if they do not Pray, if they do not Read the word of God, and do something ; How (say they) should God Bless us ? Here's a further reason of Religion. And then there is a Temper in Men, an Inclination, some in one way, and some in another.

And God is pleas'd in the way of Common Providence, and Government of the World to Imprint some sense, and awe of himself upon some more than others ; And yet all this may be laid to the very present State of this World, How else should we live, Men say ? or how should we expect a Blessing from Heaven ? And when Men are entred into a Profession, and are in a way of Profession ; They say, my Credit depends upon it, and my Reputation bears upon it, that I should maintain and carry on a Profession.

But now, beyond all this, a True Servant of God, one that is truly Espoused to Jesus Christ, and hath Bride-like affection unto him, saith, tho there were not the least reason of Religion, upon any Account whatsoever of this World ; Yet I look for the *Coming of the Bridegroom*, and I desire to be given up to him : For, there's my Happiness, and my Eternal Enjoyment ; And therefore I look not what will satisfy the World ; For, if a Man be blameless in the Duties in Publick, and have them in his Family ; All this is suited to the very Good of the present World ; If a Man minded his Interest in the present World, He would take care of all this.

But now a Christian will ask, what Godliness is that, that will be accepted at the coming of the *Bridegroom* ? What is that Repentance, that Faith, that Holiness, that Praying, that Hearing, that will be found unto Honour and Praise at the coming of the *Bridegroom* ? What must that kind of Grace be, that will bear, and hold up, That will be as *Oyl in the Vessel*, and in the Treasure, when I meet the *Bridegroom* ?

I am not concerned, whether the World speaks well, or ill of my Profession : Not, but that a Man ought to have Respect to that, which is truly *Praise-Worthy*, and of *Good Report*.

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But that, saith the upright Soul, is not my End: But I have all my Relation to the coming of my *Bridegroom*, and I look up to Him in all, how he is like to accept of my Way, and of my Services. And this the Apostle, in another Case, (But yet that may be very fairly, and well used in Relation to this) In that, 1 Cor. 7. 23. *He that is Married, careth for the things, that are of the World, how he may please his Wife. He that is unmarried (ver. 32.) Careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord.* I would onely a little vary, and say.

That that Man that desires indeed to prepare, in every thing, to meet the *Bridegroom*; He takes care in every thing, how he may please the Lord; How he may Pray, and Hear, and Believe, and Repent, and Turn to God; How he may speak, and think, and act in every Affair, and in every Business to please the Lord: For (saith he) with this, I am to meet the *Bridegroom*. And therefore I would know how it takes with him, and how it is accepted by him. And this is for a Man to go forth with his Lamp, to meet the *Bridegroom*, like a *Wise Virgin*, And not like a *Foolish one*. For the *Foolish Virgins* (undoubtedly) they had enough to bear out in this World. I don't think, but our Lord's Intention in this Parable, was to signify, that the *Foolish Virgins* were every way as fair to the Eye, as the *Wise Virgins* were, in their going forth, and in their Lamps; But here lay the difference; The *Wise Virgins* Aimed at that, that would stand, in the day when the *Bridegroom* came; And they to go to the Marriage. And therefore, let's look back in every thing, and compare our selves, with what I have spoken: Let there be a Brief Application, and a Brief Reflection by every one upon our selves, so far as I have gone.

I come now to the second thing; And that is, to prove to you, that if our Religion should be no better, nor no higher; If It had no higher End, nor business, than onely to comport to the present State of this world, It were nothing indeed, at all, if it be not raised much higher, in being prepared to meet, and to Enjoy the *Bridegroom*. Therefore we should haste on, that's the thing I am upon, to prove to you, that we ought to haste on to the Day of God; And, I suppose a Man to live as unblameably, as every one would desire he should; To be as diligent in the Duties of Christianity, as any one can expect from him; To be as ready to do good, and to be merciful to any one; And as Just, as Sober, and as Temperate, every way such, as you would desire him to be: And yet, if he hath

hath not an Eye to this, to meet the *Bridegroom* ; If he hath not a higher Aim, a higher Design of Soul, I'll shew you (I hope to the Conviction of every Person) that his Religion, his Christianity, his Goodness, (whatever you'll call it) It lies much too low ; And,

The First Argument, by which I would convince you of it, is This.

Arg. 1. Suppose a Man never so Good in himself, yet it is plain, and undeniable, that there is a mighty wicked world, every way round about : Now, if a Man truly Loves God and Christ, the wickedness that abounds in the world and so over-flows, it would make him desire that there should be another State of things : Suppose he be a Man that Swears not, why yet, when he hears those Volleys of Oaths and Blasphemies, that are every where about him ; And so in every other such Instance : This is a reason for him to desire, the *Bridegroom* should come ; Because there is such a wicked, such an Intollerable wicked World.

God's heart cannot be to this wicked world, tho *Noah*, *Job*, and *Daniel*, and all the Great Worthies should stand before him for this world ; Yet his heart could not be to this world, because of the abundance of wickednesses that are in it ; Separate from it the consideration of, in Comparison, the few Servants of God in it ; And Oh the abundance of wickedness that is in it, and of wicked Men !

There was undoubtedly a succession of Holy *Patriarchs* to the *Floud* ; And undoubtedly, they had many Godly Children, and Godly Friends, one with another ; And yet for all that, God's Heart could not be to that *Old World* ; But he must needs destroy it : And so, God's Heart cannot be to this world ; That now is, but he is resolved to burn it about the Ears of all the wicked that are in it.

And therefore, because of this, a Good Man, tho he be never so Good, and Suppose, he have very Great and High Enjoyments of God, in himself ; and suppose, he hath many Godly Friends, and Relations, and Acquaintance, that are really and truly Religious, and Holy Persons ; yet, for all this, I cannot (saith he) endure this world ; Or for all that, wherein I walk with God my self, or wherein I have any, or know any that walk with him ; After all this, after all the Good, that you can find, or hope you can find in the world, yet there are such an abundance of wicked in it, that because of this, his Zeal rises up to the coming of the *Bridegroom*, and

to the meeting of the Bridegroom: He looks for, and Hastes on to the Day of God, because of this.

Now, certainly, this is a very undeniable Argument; Who can take Pleasure? Knowing, that there are so many wicked Men Riding on Horseback; (To use that Expression of Solomon) That there is in all places, Employments, Cities, Towns, and Neighbourhoods, such great Ignorance of God, and contempt of Him, and Jesus Christ, and such wicked Conversation; a Good Man cannot be satisfied, but he must desire the Coming of the Bridegroom. Consider that Example we have in 2 Pet. 2. 7. God delivered just Lot, (as the Criticks observe, He was tormented after the manner of the Torments of Hell) vexed with the filthy Conversation of the wicked. For that righteous Man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous Soul from day to day, with their unlawful deeds; or, with their enormous deeds. So I say, when we consider the Great Enormities that are in the World, who indeed, that is a Christian, but would say. Oh that the Bridegroom would come, and put an end to this? *Wo is me, that I sojourn in Mesech, that I dwell in the Tents of Kedar!*

Arg. 2. In the Second Place, Suppose that we could overcome, and save our selves of this Reason of Desiring the Bridegroom's Coming, and might say, notwithstanding this, That we and our Houses serve God; and that our Conversation is as becomes the Gospel; and that we desire to converse with Saints; and that we have an Heavenly Society upon Earth; I say, suppose this could be said, where there is not an High Sense of the Bridegroom's Coming; yet David says, *Horror hath taken hold upon me, because they keep not thy Law. It is time for the Lord to work: (I wonder thou stayest so long) for they have made void thy Law. And Rivers of Tears run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy Law.* All this, I say, plainly proves, That if a man could save the first Consideration to himself, yet he cannot bear out himself on this Account.

O! when any of us come to look seriously into our own Hearts, Lives and Ways; can we say, That we are what we desire to be, and what we would be? Have we such a Tenor of Thoughts, such a constant Chain of Holy, and Serious, and Wise Thoughts? Do we keep our Mouths with a Bit and Bridle, while the wicked is before us? Do we take care to speak always so, That our Speech is seasoned with Salt, and that it ministers Grace to the hearers? Are our Hearts so in the Enjoyment of God, and Commu-

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nion with him; That we may say, *It is Good for us to be here*? Or, do we meet, in such Ordinances Publickly Administred, with such Power, and Powerful Preaching, Gospel Administrations, The Lords Supper, Keeping and Observing the Lords Day, as we desire? Do we find that there is so much in these, That we can our selves say, we have Reason to rest here, or to continue in this State?

Or, do we not find a continual complaint? Like that of *Paul*, Rom. 7. *The Good, that I would, I do not: But the Evil which I would not, that I do. I find then a Law, that when I would do Good, Evil is present with me.* And so in Verse 24. He comes to cry out, *O wretched Man that I am, who shall deliver me from the Body of this Death.*

If this World could stand, Yet *This Body of Sin and Death* is such, that I could wish it were at an End. Who shall rescue and unchain me from this *Body*, wherein I am Fettered and Held, that I cannot do the things that I desire to do, to the Glory of God in it? So that there is a Chain upon our Minds and Hearts, That the very consideration of it should make us earnestly desire the *coming of the Bridegroom.*

3. A Third Consideration: Suppose now, neither of these Reasons sufficient, why we should desire the *coming of the Bridegroom*; Yet, I beseech you, consider, whether the Glory of Christ be not a proper and Condign Object of our desires? Whether it be worthy of him, that he should have no higher, nor more Glorious State in this World, than he yet hath? Can you be content, that the Nations should be given to Idolatry, or *Mahometanism* among the *Turks*? Would you be willing the *Papists* should have so great a part of the Christian World, still under their Darkness, and Superstition? Would you be willing that so many Tyrants as have, and so many as are ready still to do it, should be Riding over the Heads of the Saints and Servants of God, and that his Worship should be cast down to the Ground? And that the *Sanctuary* should be *Trodden underfoot by the Gentiles*? And that the *Abomination of Desolation* should stand where it ought not? Could any Man, that Loves the Glory of God, and the Glory of Christ, be content with this? Who does not (that is seriously a Christian) long, That might be fulfilled? *From the Rising of the Sun, to the going down of the same, Thy Name, O Lord, shall be Great. That Christ should have his Portion given Him with the Great, and with the Strong; That the Ends of the Earth should be His; That Knowledge should cover the*

Earth, as the Waters do the Sea. If any Love God, and Love Christ; I appeal to you, whether we could be content, Things should be as they are, and not as they are thus foretold?

Let me make a plain, and a Familiar Comparison, and bring it to our selves: I would suppose now, as I know, there are many that are Zealous in this Nation, for *King James*: They know he is out of the Nation, and (as it were) an Exile from them: And tho they may have a Great, Plentiful, Competent Estates, and Great Riches: Yet they think, things are not well, and as they should be: Because they say, things are not as they should be, to exclude a Just and Lawful Prince as they think.

I make onely this Allusion; My Judgment is enough known.

Suppose, any Profess to Love Jesus Christ; Then think with your selves, whether it can consist with your Loyalty to Christ, with your desire of his Glory, and his Kingdom, that it should be at so low an Ebb as it is? Now I am sure, if you weighed these, and much more that might be said, and all of them together; You would plainly say, that there can be no Truth, nor no Loyalty of Christianity, without an Earnest Desire and Preparation in your selves continually, for the *Bridegrooms coming*. Surely, to be Rich onely, as to this world, and after the rate and pass of it, and to *our selves*, can no way satisfy a *Wise Virgin* in Christianity.

But now, Alas! We may see it very much otherwise; who can but observe it every where, and with all manner of Persons, that we may converse with; of the Higher, and Lower Degree, even of the *First Three* (as I may speak) in Christianity; (As it was said of *David's Worthies*) I say, if you take even those of the *First Three*; We cannot but say, there's too Great a Byass, too Great a Propension, too Great an Inclination and Poize of Men, towards this VWorld; They are for every thing Pleasing, and Desirable, and Pleasurably affecting in it: And they hold off as much as they can from a belief of the nearness of the coming of Jesus Christ.

Now, how comes this to pass in the VWorld? Give me leave, very briefly, to Represent the reasons of this to you, and the way, or method, how these things have come into the VWorld.

I am sure, I may, without any uncharitableness, or untenderness, say, that the Religion and Christianity of not one of a Hundred, but is onely Calculated for the present State: And they would, that all the State, and Trade, and Government, and the VVealth,
and

The Parable of the Ten Virgins.

and Peace, and Plenty, and Prosperity of it, should go on still. Than that there should be an approach of the *Bridegroom* and Kingdom of Christ. The Reasons of these things, I'll give you in three Particulars.

1. The first is; It comes to pass by the *Bridegrooms Delaying his coming*, that hath given the Advantage and Opportunity to this State of Things; if Christ had come as soon as he Rose, as soon as ever he sent forth the Apostolick Preachers; Things would have been found in a far other temper, than now; For when I come, (saith Christ) *Shall I find Faith on the Earth?* But now it was so necessary for Him, in the Wisdom of the Father, and in his own wisdom, to delay his coming, that, he Swore; It was a thing of so great concernment, *Dan. 12.* That there should be *Time, Times, and Half a Time*, before his coming should be: So he did *Chronize*, he drew out Time, till his coming; And that hath given Advantage to all that Deadness of Christianity, to all that low posture of things. So the Apostle saith, *2 Thes. 2.* *That day cannot come except there be a falling away first.* Thus the day was Post-pon'd, it could not come; And so observe, *Mat. 25.* Where the *Bridegroom Delayed his coming, they all slumbered and slept.* Ver. 5. While the *Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.*

And in *Matth. 24.* Pray observe, how the Spirit of God Insists upon this, that there was a delay of the coming of Christ. ver. 48. *But, and if that Evil Servant shall say in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming, &c.* So here's the sleep, and space given, for the possibility of such sleep, such a low State in Christianity, as there is by *Christ delaying his coming.* Some are ready to say, he'll never come, there will never be any such thing: Why is it not sooner? Why has it been so long? Men have time to do something else; We must find somewhat or other, to pass away the Time, till our *Bridegroom comes*: And so they fall into a slumber: As many, in Morality have discoursed the great degeneracy of humane nature, say they, the Intellectual Life is Slumbered by the Animal Life; And, as some have desired to *Allegorize* the History of Adam and Eve; Adam, when Eve was taken out of him, fell into a sleep; you know, God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam; And so (say they) that lower Soul came to have the Predominancy, and to get above, because the Life of Adam was in a slumber, it was in a sleep:

Give me leave by this to express to you, my sense in what I am now upon; as soon as ever the Professors of Christianity did perceive

ceive that the *Bridegroom* did not come : The lower Life began to get above, and the Christians, even of the first Times, began to *slumber and sleep* : We have many instances of it ; *Demas hath left us, having Loved the present World.* Demas was not onely a single Example ; But he was a Peculiar Pattern of the State of Christianity, *Having Loved this present World* ; So says the Apostle, there is no Man like minded to *Epaphroditus*, that naturally cares for your State : For all Men seek their own, not the things which are *Jesus Christ's*, Phil. 2. So I say, here was presently a *Slumbering* of the Power of Christianity.

And then, there's a Great Example of this Worldly Grandeur rising, in that of *Diotrephes*, in the third Epistle of *John* ver. 9. *He Loved to have the pre-Eminence.* Now, as I said of *Demas*, so I say of *Diotrephes* ; It was not onely a single Example, But the Bishops of the Churches of Christ, began to Love *Preeminency*, to Love Grandeur ; To Love *Prelation*, and to set up one above another : And thus the *Apostacy* began to creep in : And so Christianity degenerated into a Worldly Interest, a Worldly Gain, a Worldly Greatness, a VWorldly State. And here the Life and Power of Christianity fell asleep ; It was in a *Slumber* : And this Spirit went from one to another, and from hand to hand. And tho the *Reformation* amongst us, hath made a great change among those, that are called *Protestants*, yet, we are not awakened. The *Bridegroom* must be nearer his coming, before the Protestant Churches will awake.

And, besides, you see, even to this day, that Men in the Profession of the Gospel, in the several ways of Men, Make Christianity a Point of Interest in the concernments of the present Life ; I speak not this, by way of Censure or Reproach, but to represent things plainly to you, how it is, and how it comes to pass, that we are not more in haste and earnest for the coming of the *Bridegroom*. And then,

3. In the third Place ; (And that indeed, which in part I have prevented my self in) the *Apostacy* hath come to swallow up so great a part of Christianity ; Even so openly, and avowedly in all the *Papal* parts of the VWorld : And there are such Roots, and Remainers, and Twiggs, and Twines of it, about the *Protestancy* ; That it cannot be, till Christ is nearer his coming, that the VWorld will be awakened to see the entry of his coming, Even the *Protestant World*, and the most professing part of Christianity.

I come now to the Second Head I proposed : And that is, to open to you the Answers to the Objections, that may be made.

Obj. 1. *You may say (in the first Place) If this be the tendency of such a Discourse, it seems a kind of Monkish Superstition; a kind of Living alone, and minding nothing in the World; it brings in a kind of a Penance and Endurance, like that among the Papists; whereas the Scripture seems to allow us a free Enjoyment of the World, and of the things of it.*

Ans. Now, in Answer to this, I would onely say, that one sort of extream is ready to swallow up another, if we do not take heed; A Man may remove so far from such Ideas and Apprehensions as these are, that he may fall into a perfect *Worldliness*, an Enjoyment of this VWorld: I dare not say any thing against a VVise, and Sober, and Holy, and Temperate use of the things of this world, and a Diligence in our Places and in our Stations; But I say, we have every one of us great need to take heed; For, we tread upon the Brinks of danger, we tread upon the very Brinks of Destruction: And therefore, we should walk with the greatest VVariness, and with the greatest Jealousy; There is, undoubtedly, an allowance of these things. And yet for all that; Seeing it is such a State of the world, as it is, (As I shall shew you presently) we have Reason upon all Accounts, to desire that it should be at an End; Because we walk so much upon Snares, and Temptations in the present State; Notwithstanding, I don't say as they, take heed ye *Touch not, Tasse not*, nor come near to any of these things.

But this I am perswaded, There are some Remains of the *Purity of Christianity*, in that which such persons pretend to, though they have Debauch'd them: They have turned them into abominable Superstition, and into Great and Detestable Idleness and Sloth, and to Horrible Impurity and Luxury, under the pretence of such a Separation from the World. But yet still (I say) at the first, there was some Vein of the Contempt of this World, and of Despising Things here below; In the Justice of God, leaving Men to themselves, This was corrupted into Hateful and Abominable Superstition; it is a Thing very Remarkable: You know there are those that are called the *Mendicants*, or those that go up and down, and profess nothing but Begging: But then, on the other side, There are no Courts so splendid in the World, as that of *Cardinals, Bishops* and *Archbishops*. So that it is a kind of Expedient, and Trick, to hold up the Pre-eminence of the *Roman Church*, by a
 seeming

seeming Contempt of the World, in the other part. I told you, Religion is necessary for this World, for the present State of it; so the Beggery and Superstition of those that profess *Poverty* among the *Papists*, it is absolutely necessary to uphold the Greatness and Splendor of the *Court of Rome*, and those that depend upon it, on one side, by that *Poverty* on the other; For it seems to Cogg Men into a belief, that there's an excellency in the *Papish Church*, by producing in it such an Example of Contempt of the World; These are the *Lying Wonders* that are amongst them, and fair pretences, by which they delude. But still I say, tho we have lost it, it cannot but be allowed, there ought to be now, and much more there shall be a State of the management of the present World, according to Christianity; so as not to run into Superstition; And yet to raise the Glory of Christ, and his Kingdom far above this World.

Object. 2. I come to the Second Objection; *How shall the World be maintained, if all were such Earnest Pursuers, and Hasters on to the Day of God, as now, what I have discours'd of, seems to lead to? Certainly Families would be at an End; all Business would cease; and the maintaining of Kingdoms; of Laws and Rights of Government; There would be an End of all These.*

Answer. Now therefore I say to you, If any Man have his Soul preft upon the Kingdom of God, and the Coming of Christ; and the Coming of the Bridegroom; Let us consider what an Answer Jesus Christ gives, *Luke 9. 59.* Christ had called one to follow him: Saith he, *Whither shall I follow thee?* I am willing to do it; where must I go? Saith Christ (*Verse 58.*) *Foxes have Holes, and Birds of the Air have Nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his Head:* That is, you must not take care for this, where you shall have a Rest, and whither you shall go; you must Resign up All: But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my Father. And Jesus said unto him, *Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God:* That is, The Kingdom of God is of Greater Necessity, than even that which seems to be so great a peice of Piety, and Humanity, to Go, and bury a Father.

But you may still urge, *How great would the Inconvenience of this be, if Men should do thus? How would there be any support of the present State of the World?*

For that therefore I would refer you to another place, that is in the same Evangelist, *Luke, Chap. 14. 16.* *The Kingdom of Heaven* (saith

(saith he) is like unto a certain Man, that made a Great Supper, and bade many. That Supper is the Beginnings of Grace here, even to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. But they all with one consent began to make excuse: The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of Ground; I am a Purchaser; You must excuse me from being so Religious; I am upon a Purchase. And another said, I have bought five Toke of Oxen, and I go to prove them; I pray thee have me excused: I am an Husbandman, and I cannot take care so of Religion: And another said, I have married a Wife, and therefore I cannot come, upon that account. And in another Evangelist, They went to their Merchandise: I have a Great Trade, and I cannot carry on the present State, if I mind so much the Kingdom of Christ. And therefore I say, The Purchasing, and Husbandry, and Merchandise, and the Enjoyments of this World, and Relations, they are great Hinderances indeed, to the Glory of the Kingdom of Christ. But then,

The Second Thing I would say to you, which may give you Great Satisfaction as to this: If there were such a Spirit poured out from on high; Don't think the World would be so Inconvenient by it; It would be brought into a more High, a Better, and more Excellent State; I am sure, If the Spirit were so poured out upon the World; That Men did not excuse themselves from the Kingdom of Heaven, by their Trade, Relations, and Families; And by their Interest in the present VWorld; I am sure, that the Trees of the Wood would yield forth of themselves to us: The Hills would flow down with Milk, and the Mountains with Wine. VVhenever God will bring the VWorld into a Religious State indeed; Don't take care as if the State of the VWorld could not be upheld; For, it shall be upheld, and be more Happy and Blessed, than it is now, Joel 3. 18. And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Mountains shall drop down New Wine, and the Hills shall flow down with Milk, and all the Rivers of Judah shall flow with Waters, &c. Every thing shall be Happy and Prosperous; Instead of the Thorn shall come up the Fir Tree, and instead of the Bryar shall come up the Mirtle Tree, and it shall be to the Lord for a Name, and for a Memorial. When God comes to make the world truly Good, to bring in a Profession of Christianity, not in Word, but in Power; I say, when that comes to pass, there shall be such a strange plenty to the World, such a strange Providence over the Creation: All that, which we take so much care about, and with so much Sin, and hatred, and envy one at another.

another; It will come so freely, there will be no need of disturbance of, and distracting our selves, or one another: When we come in High sense to be the Servants of God, and to be in such a State; All Creatures in Heaven, and Earth, would come, and lay down their Service at our Feet. *The Heavens would hear the Earth, and the Earth would hear the Corn, and the Wine, and the Oyl; And they would hear Jezreel, Amos 9. 11. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the Plowman shall overtake the Reaper, and the Treaders of Grapes him that soweth the Seed; That is, the Harvest shall be sooner than the very Plowing.*

All Creatures, in Heaven and Earth, would offer themselves to us: And all the Riches, that we dive for now, so deep into the Bowels of the Earth, and into the bottom of the Sea, they would come up, and be at our hand, in that Day, when the *Kingdom of Jesus Christ* shall be thus Universally upon the World, and when the *Desire of Nations shall come.*

I would shut up this, in a very Brief Application to you.

Use. 1. In the First Place; Let it move us seriously, to fill up our Religion with this Character of it; *The Virgins went forth to meet the Bridegroom*: There was the great mark in their Eye, the great design in their Eye; Now, ask your selves, I beseech you, is your Religion in *meeting the Bridegroom*? Is not your Praying, Morning and Evening, because it is good Family-Order? It is a good thing for Reputation, and Credit: Is it not because you are afraid, if you Rise up and Lie down without Prayer, God won't Bless you that Day, nor give you good rest that Night? He won't succeed you in your Calling; And in the Duties and Business of it? Is it not because natural Conscience would cry out, and say, what! Do you live like a Heathen, yea a Brute, and like a Beast?

I acknowledge, these are valuable Reasons in their kind. But sure, there is a Higher, a Greater Reason to go forth to *meet the Bridegroom*; Because, throughout all the Account, that can be given, why Men are Religious, if this be not Principal, if this be not the Supreme End, that I would *meet the Bridegroom*; It is not of the Excellent True Alloy; Therefore Buoy up your Spirits, raise them, wind them up to this great height, I'll go forth to *meet the Bridegroom*. I pray this Morning, that I may *meet with the Bridegroom*; I go to hear this day, That I may *meet with the Bridegroom*: I would not have these great things wound up onely within the Circle of this Life, in this manner; Here comes Business, and here comes

Prayer;

Prayer; And so there's Sleep, and Eating, and Drinking; All comes in a Round, and we would have this Round always observed; And it calls to Publick Prayer, and to other of those Duties: Now, if we turn about onely in this Circle, we run on Endlessly about; But our care must be higher, *Viz. To meet the Bridegroom.*

Use. 2. In the Second Place; I beseech you, consider whether your Religion be of this excellent kind, that you would be willing to meet the Bridegroom?

Is it that, which I believe in my Soul, enlightned by the Spirit of God, my Conscience bearing me Witness in the Holy Ghost, that it will please the Bridegroom? Are my Thoughts, Affections, manner of Conversation such?

And what reason have we, and do we Humble our selves before our Bridegroom, when we consider this will not please; when we consider, this is not fine enough, Ornamental enough to his Glory, of value enough? I would not meet him with Tinsel, instead of Gold, and real worth.

I would not meet him with false Diamonds instead of real ones. So I would not meet him with Hypocritical, formal Prayers without real Grace. And then,

Use. 3. In the third Place; I beseech you consider; I don't expect, there should be many Subscribing to that Account of Time, that I have given out; Tho it be upon great and strong Foundations in the Word of God; Yet I challenge nothing from any, but so far as they see in that Light.

But I would onely ask you this Question, upon the occasion of it; Suppose it a true, and real Scripture Account, that I have given out, and that, within so little a Time, there shall be yet so great a change of the World; And Men shall begin to unhinge from the Earth, and Earthly Foundations; Would you be glad of it? Or, have you not a secret Trouble and Enmity against it? And that you would have the World still go on, and Ages to run on so; I say, try your selves, as to this; I think, it cannot be any Injury, for any to propose this; Seeing we should be continually upon our watch, for this very thing, when our Lord will come.

Use. 4. In the fourth Place; I beseech you consider the great difference between the City of the Servants of Christ, of those that are of the true *Wise Virgins* in Christianity; And between the City of those that are not, or are *Foolish Virgins*. I would but very briefly represent that to you in Scripture-Expression, and so I will conclude.

If you consider the City of the Servants of Jesus Christ, consider it in that of the last Chapter of Ezekiel, and the very last Verse, the End of that Prophecie; *And the Name of the City, in that day shall be, The Lord is there.* There shall be the *Bridegroom*; There shall be the *Glory of the Prince himself*: That's the *City* wherein Christ will entertain those, that have the *Bride-like Affection*. And, *Rev. 21. 2.*

I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem coming down from God out of Heaven, Prepared as a Bride adorned for her Bridegroom. Here's the *City* of those that are *Virgins in Spirit* to Christ, in the sincere Love of him, that shall be presented at that day, as *Chast Virgins* to him.

But now consider on the other side, You have the Name of another *City*; And it is very admirable, And I cannot but propose my Observation to you, that God hath been pleased, very lately to cause me to consider, and to observe; There is the Name of another *City*, I say; And it is the Name of the *City of the Multitude*. *Ezek. 39. 17. The Name of that City shall be Hamonah. And they shall cleanse the Land. The Name of that City shall be Hamonah. Or, The Multitude thereof: Or its Multitude.* That is, *The Dead*; Those that are *slain with the Sword of Christ's Mouth*: *The Gog-Magog*: Tho they are *Dead*; That is, as to the sense of *Glory, and Life, and Happiness, and Peace, and Enjoyment*, yet they are in *Being*, for they have a *City*.

It were but in vain, that meer *Dead* should have a *City*; But those *Dead*, that is, they that are not *Partakers of the first Resurrection*; Their *City*, the Name of it is *Hamonah*, the *Multitude of the World* are of that *City*, and belong to that *City*, and are taken at last into that *City*. *Multitudes, Multitudes*, as it is said in *Joel 3. Multitudes, Multitudes*, in the *Valley of Decision*, and the *Valley of Excision*: They are not onely *Judged*, but cut off; They are *slain with the Sword of Christ's Mouth*; As it is said, *Rev. 20. 5. They lived not again till the End of the Thousand Years.* That is, they lay in *Chains*, under the *Footstool of Christ*; At the *End of the Thousand Years*, God gave them leave to move a little, and they make a *New Attempt*. And then *Fire comes down upon them, and casts them into the Lake.*

And if you think all this is too *Metaphorical*, or too *Nice*, and *Curious*, and that you cannot understand so well; I'll conclude all, with that of *Matth. 7. 13.* Where you shall find the very *Hamonah*

in plain, Doctrinal, Practical Discourse it tells. *Enter ye in at the narrow Gate; for wide is the Gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to Destruction; And many there be which go in thereat.*

As the *New Jerusalem* hath its *Gates*, and an *Angel* before it; So the *City* here is the *City of Destruction*, as it is called, *Iſa. 19.* It hath its *Gate*; But it is a *Wide Gate*: It lets in every one, that is not taken up into the *New Jerusalem*; There be many; There is a *Hamonah*, there is a *Multitude*, that go in thereat.

Therefore, let us seriously take heed, Look diligently to this, lest any of us *fail of the Grace of God*, of the true *Bride-like* affection, by which we may enter with him, with the *Bridegroom*, into the *Wedding*, when he comes, &c.

S E R M O N I V.

On *Matth. XXV. Ver. 1.* and so on to *Ver. 13.*

Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto Ten Virgins, which took their Lamps, and went forth to meet the Bridegroom.

I Have (you know) made entrance into this Great Parable, which I told you, is in an admirable manner prepared, and fitted, to be a Representation of the *Kingdom* of the Lord *Jesus Christ*, as I have shew'd you,

First, Even from the Beginning to the Complement and Perfection of it; *It is the Kingdom of Heaven.*

I have shewn you, that the very meaning of all Christianity is a *Going forth to meet the Bridegroom*; And therefore, the present State, is a State of *Espousals*, a State, wherein we are Contracted, and Affianced unto the Great *Bridegroom*; For, that the Eye of every Christian, the great Aim and Design of those that are *Wise Virgins*, is, that they may have a much higher Enjoyment of *Christ*, than they have now; And because the Religion that is for the present World, and the present State, will not serve the great Interest and great purpose of our Immortal beings.

I shall now proceed to a fourth Doctrine, or Proposition from these words.

They went forth to meet the Bridegroom; And they that were ready, they went in with him to the Wedding. So, the Observation that I shall lay down to you, is this;

That all those that are Christ's, they are to hold (according to the Scripture Expression) they are to hold a *Great Feast* unto *Jehovah*.

The great Intention, and meaning of the Gospel, is to assure us, that after the Time of Preparation, and the Time of the *Esponsals*, there shall be a *Glorious Festival*; A *Glorious Feast*, *The Marriage Supper of the Lamb*; As you know it is called: And I shall endeavour to open this to you, according to the Scripture-Light, concerning it; And then, I shall compare it with all the Feasts, that we read of in Scripture, under the Law; And so I shall come to make the Application of it, to our own State, and Condition.

First therefore, to make it evident to you, that this is a great Notion of Scripture; That there is a *Feast* to be held; a *Feast* of Joy and Rejoycing, and of Happiness, to be held to *Jehovah*. And it is this very *Marriage-Supper* (as you shall see) of the *Lamb*.

That the Scripture delights in this Representation, is very evident, by sundry Great Expressions of it.

Maiah 25. 6, 7, 8. And in this Mountain shall the Lord of Hosts make unto all People a Feast of Fat things, a Feast of Wines on the lees, of Fat things full of Marrow; Of Wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this Mountain the Face of the covering cast over all People, and the vail that is spread over all Nations; He will swallow up Death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away Tears from off all Faces, and the rebuke of his People shall he take away from off all the Earth; For the Lord hath spoken it.

There is a great *Feast* that God will make to all People: And it is set out by such Kind of Resemblances and Similitudes, as express a Great, and a Plentiful, and a Rich, and a most Delicious Entertainment among Men; *Fat things full of Marrow; And Wines on the Lees well refined. And in this Mountain* (saith God) *I'll destroy the Face of the covering, cast over all People, and the Vail that is spread over all Nations.* When this *Feast* comes, there shall be no *Pagan Nation*; There shall be no *Mahometan Nation*; There shall be no *Popish Antichristian Nation*; There shall be no unbelieving *Jews* then in the World: God will Draw off the *Face of the covering cast over all People.* And every one shall see in the Clearness, and in the Beauty, and in the Glory, and in the Majesty of the Truth of God, and of the

the Religion of Jesus Christ; That the Religion of Christianity shall not be upbraided with this; Why are there so great Nations that are under the Prophet Mahomet, as we are under Jesus Christ? Are there not great Traffes of the World that are not known? And do not the Jews, that have the Doctrine of the Scriptures in the *Old Testament*; Do they not deny Christ? All these things (that I may speak in a Familiar phrase) Christianity is twitted with, upbraided, reproached with. But in the day of that *Feast*; All the Darkness of that State shall be drawn off. In all our Feasts now, there is necessary a taste of Death. As I remember, the great Prince *Philip of Macedon*, when he had the most Sumptuous and Magnificent Entertainement; He had first of all a Deaths Head served up, in the Beginning of the Feast: As if he should say, tho I have entertained you now, like a Prince, and with all the Imaginable Royalty that you can expect; Yet now after all this; I and you must Dyē. So should we do, in all our Eating and Drinking, if we do but consider it, we do but onely feed (as we have a Phrase) we do but onely feed Death; We do but pamper Bodies, to make a Feast for the Worms.

Now (saith the Lord) in this Feast I will take away all Tears, and Shame, and Reproach from all People, utterly take it off. O therefore! VVho would not Aim, and Design this, to be at this great Feast, that must be held to *Jehovah*? And that he himself will hold for all his People, as the great Prince and Master, and Lord of it:

So you know, there is nothing more ordinary in the Gospel, than to compare the State of Things to a great Supper, *Matth. 22*. He describes the *Kingdom of Heaven* by such a Supper, as this. The *Kingdom of Heaven* (saith he) is like unto a certain King, which made a Marriage for his Son, and he sent forth his Servants to call them that were bidden to the Wedding; And they would not come; Again, he sent forth other Servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, behold, I have prepared my Dinner: My Oxen and my Fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: Come unto the Marriage; But they made light of it: And when the King came in to see the guests, he saw there a Man, which had not on a Wedding-Garment. (Ver. 11. 12.) As I shall after endeavour to enforce in the Application. But you see plainly, that it is a great Nuptial Feast, that the Glory of the *Kingdom of Christ* is Represented by: So it is said, His Servants wait for him: There is a place of great moment to what we are upon, that is Dis-advantageously

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Translated: And therefore I would desire that you would take something the more Notice of it, *Matth. 13. 34. The Son of Man (faith he) is as a Man taking a far Journey, who left his House, and gave Authority to his Servants, and to every Man his Work, and Commanded the Porter to watch: Watch ye therefore, for ye know not when the Master of the House cometh.* And this, in *Luk. 12.* It is called, a coming because of the Wedding, ver. 46. That's the Expression I would desire a little that you would take Notice of; And ye your selves like unto Men that wait for the Lord, when he will return from the Wedding; VVe Translate. But the word in the Greek will very well signifie, Because of the Wedding, or upon the Account of the Wedding. When Christ comes; He comes because, or upon the Account of the Wedding: And that he may be present at that great Feast, that is to be held unto the Lord our God. I'll give you but one Scripture more; And so I hope you will be fully satisfied, that it is the Witness of the Divine Spirit, to Represent to us the State of the Glory and Kingdom of Christ, by a great Nuptial-Feast, or Entertainment. It is in the Nineteenth Chapter of the *Prophecie of the Revelation*, Verse 7. *Let us be glad, and rejoyce, and give honour to him; for the Marriage of the Lamb is come.* And Verse 9. *And he saith unto me, Write. Let this thing be taken notice of, let it be written in Letters, that he that runs may read; Blessed are they which are called unto the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb. Blessed are they which are called, and invited to the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb.*

I shall now therefore proceed in these Two Generals, before I close all in the Application.

First of all, to shew you, what the Importance and meaning of this Great Supper, or the Great Feast, that we are to hold to *Jehovah*, is. And then,

In the Second Place, I shall give you a brief Parallel between all the Feasts that were appointed to the Servants and People of God, in the Old Testament; and this Great Feast that is to be held to *Jehovah*.

To give you therefore the Sense, and the Meaning of it, in these Two Expressions.

First, It is a Time of the Greatest Solemnity, Glory, and Lustre, and Splendor, and Joy, and Blessedness, that the Creation ever knew, or can know, in the State of a Creation. I say, it is a State, or a Time of the greatest Magnificence, of the greatest Joy and Enjoyment, that ever was known in the whole Creation; nothing
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The Parable of the Ten Virgins.

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ever like to that. Alas! the Days that we now know here in the World; take those that have been the most Lightsome, the most Prosperous, they are all Dark, and Gloomy, and Cloudy Days, in comparison of that Day, of the Great Glory, and the Great Festival that he speaks of.

Indeed, it is very desirable to find the Hearts of any possess seriously with God, and with Religion, and with Holiness, and with Christianity, and with Communion with God, and Enjoyment of him, according to the present State of Things. But, if we did but know, how low the Condition is now, wherein we are; If we did but consider, what a Dark, Black Cloud there hangs over all; a Cloud of Corruption, a Cloud of Unhappiness, a Cloud of Sorrow and Affliction, it is they live in; And it comes upon the most Eminent Servants of God; you know, in what a Cloud they are wrapt up, as to all bodily Appearance, when they come to Die; and what a Cloud of Corruption hovers over them; For, take the most Excellent Preachers, and the most Holy Men, if you could follow them into all the Retirements of their Thoughts and Ways, you would see, that there is a Deadness, there is an Emptiness of God; There is a Low State, wherein they now are; taken up with many thoughts, with Variety of Imaginations here, against which they wrestle, and are in Combate: And though it is most Desirable to Them, to be Holy and Religious, to the very uttermost, yet alas! This Uttermost here, is such a Nothing, compared with what shall be; That we have Reason earnestly to look to that Great Festival, to that great Marriage-Supper; And to desire that things might be Brighter, Clearer, and Purer, and more Transcendent, than ever they have yet been.

Surely, there is some Divine purpose (tho we may not easily find it). Why the Divine Spirit of God makes so great the Feast and Preparation of Ahasuerus, Esther 1. 1. *Ahasuerus, which Reigned from India, even unto Ethiopia, over an Hundred, and Seven and Twenty Provinces. That in those days, when the King Ahasuerus sat on the Throne of his Kingdom, which was in Shushan the Palace, &c. VWhen he shewed (ver. 4.) the Riches of his Glorious Kingdom, and the Honour of his excellent Majesty, many days, even an Hundred, and Four-score Days; and when those days were expired, the King made a Feast unto all the People that were present: And there was the most excellent Furniture; the most Splendid and Glorious Furniture, and Entertainment. All that they were served in, were Vessels of Gold: And Royal Wines in abundance.*

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In all this State of it, Surely, there is a Diviner purpose in Scripture relating it; Tho I shall not venture to give any Judgment concerning it: Yet I make no doubt, that it was Intended, to be a Representation of the Glory of the *Kingdom of Christ*.

For, Indeed, those four Monarchies, tho they have kept the *Kingdom of Christ* thus long, from its Glory, and from its Appearance, yet there was some kind of *Image*, and *Representation* of the *Kingdom of Christ* in them: And, it is very observable, that the *Persian Monarchs*, above all others, Were greatly serviceable to the Temple of God, the *Type* of the *Kingdom of Christ*. And so, God chose, I am perswaded (I will not engage far in it) this great *Feast of Abasuerus*, with such a care of Sobriety: And it was given to Represent the Glory, and Riches, and Magnificence (in a Spiritual sense) wherein the *Marriage Supper of the Lamb* shall be held. So I say, All is a signification of that Life, of that Light, of that Glory, of that Blessedness, of that Holiness, of that Purity, that shall be in the *Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ*.

It Represents that exceeding Joy; As it is said, in *Psalm 16*. *Thou wilt shew me the Path of Life: In thy presence is fullness of Joy; And at thy Right Hand there are Pleasures for evermore.* Indeed, it is first applyed to Christ, and in him, to all His: *Thou wilt not leave my Soul in Hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy one to see Corruption.* For, at this time, *The Lord our God shall come, and all his Saints with him; All his Dead Saints shall be raised to this great Feast; He will not leave their Souls in Hell, nor suffer his Holy ones to see Corruption. He'll swallow up Death in victory. In that Feast, he'll shew them the Path of Life: And the Entertainment of that Feast, is fullness of Joy, and Pleasures for evermore.*

And so, in that Place of *Isaiah*, I read to you; Where God *wipes Tears from all Faces; And the reproach and rebuke of his People he shall take off.* All the Glory of the whole Creation of God, and of his mighty Power in it is made use of to set forth a visible State of Joy, and Glory; It shall be on purpose brought out for that day, for the Glory, and for the Honour of that *Feast*.

2. In the Second Place; Hereby is signified to us, that even this *Festival*, it is but for an appointed Time. It is for a Limited Time: In regard of the manner of it, in regard of the visibility of it; As it is a thing to be seen, so it is for a Limited Time: For, it is received into absolute Eternity, *And the Kingdom is delivered up.*

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(As the Apostle speaks) to God, and to the Father. It is for a Limited Time; and it is in Preparation to that Union with God, to all Eternity. And therefore it is Represented to us, by a *Thousand Years*. It is a Feast of a *Thousand Years*. As *Ahasuerus* held a Feast of *One Hundred and Fourscore Days*; Jehovah for Jesus Christ his Son, (for the Nuptials betwixt him and his Church) holds a Feast of a *Thousand Years*; And when that is at an End, Then (as the Apostle speaks) in the 1 Cor. 15. (That most Notable Place of Scripture, that I have so often endeavoured to Imprint the Sense of upon you) *Then cometh the End (Verse 24.) when he shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all Rule, and all Authority and Power. And (Then, Verse 28.) when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him, that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*

So, I say, It is a Limited Time; Even though That be a Great Time, and it is called a *Kingdom*, that never ends, because the Glory does not go off; But, as when the *Nuptial Feast* is over, Persons of Great Condition, and of Princely Estate, you know; They are still in Glory and still in Lustre; though it be in a more settled State. So Christ, and all his Saints, they are in a perpetual Joy, in perpetual Happiness, that does not end. But only the Glory and Magnificence of the Wedding and Nuptials ends.

I shall now endeavour to parallel to you the *Feasts of the Old Testament*; and to shew you, That the Spiritual Sense, and the Spiritual Meaning of them, is, This Great Solemnity of the *Kingdom of Jesus Christ*. That you may know therefore, That those *Feasts* that we read of in the *Old Testament*, are truly, and indeed the Emblems and the Figures, and the Types, and the Shadows of Spiritual Things; Even of this Great *Kingdom of Jesus Christ*: I shall give you that Standard of Scripture, that ought to be a Rule to us, in all things, concerning the Types of the *Old Testament*. Saith the Apostle, *Heb. 8.* (It is a Thing he often takes notice of) Verse 5. *Which serve unto the Example and Shadow of Heavenly Things*; As *Moses* was admonished of God, when he was about to make the *Tabernacle*. For, See, (saith he) that thou make all things according to the Pattern shewed thee in the Mount. Because God understood his own Kingdom, and this Great Feast that he would hold; *Moses* was to do nothing, without special Command, and Precept, and Direction for it: All was to Answer Exactly, to what was to

come; All was a Shadow and Example of Heavenly Things: *Moses* therefore must be most careful, that he did not make Any Thing but according to the Pattern. And so *Heb. 9. 9.* Which was a Figure (saith he, speaking of the Old Oeconomy, and Frame of Things under *Moses*) for the time then present; &c. Which stood only in Meats and Drinks, and such Things, until the Time of Reformation. They were for the Time present; So we Translate: But the word *ὑπεναντίας*, in the Greek, signifies a Time pressing, urging, and an Insisting Suggestion; and (as I may say) against the Glory of the Kingdom of Christ. And, indeed, so are All the Times, from the very Fall of *Adam* to the Kingdom of Christ: Times that press, and crowd against the Kingdom of Christ: For, if this Time present were but at an End, that lies as a Bar, and hinderance in the way, the Kingdom of Christ would immediately break out: As when that Time shall come, of which the *Angel* (*Rev. 10.*) sware, Time shall be no more; when once it comes to that, Time shall be no more: A better State of Things shall come in. The Kingdom of Christ shall immediately come in, as soon as God hath removed the present Time, the Time now pressing against it, The Kingdom of Christ will flow in a main: As when the Flood-Gates are drawn up, when that which is as the Bar in the way, is taken away, immediately, like a great Torrent, the Kingdom of Christ will come in. When time shall be no more; that is, such a time, as hitherto hath press'd against that Kingdom, tho' in the mean Time It is made Subordinate, and leads to it; But that is a note, rather by the way. The Thing that I chiefly intend is, that all things in the Old Testament were but Figures and Types of things that were to come. I shall therefore give you a Brief-Compare: For, I will be as short in it, as possibly I can: You shall find, that one Great Branch of the Religion of *Moses*, or the Worship of God in the Old Testament, and according to the Law of *Moses*; one great Branch of it was the holding of so many Feasts in a Year to the Lord. The 23d. of *Leviticus* does give us a Description of all those Feasts: And, I shall (as I say) in Brief, compare them.

First, There was the Feast of every Week, which was the Sabbath, the Jewish Sabbath, the Seventh Day; And so the Seventh Year; and the Seven Seventh Year, that is, which made up a Seven of Seven Weeks, of Years. All this, there was observ'd in the Time of the Law. There is that which we now call the Lords Day; It was then the Seventh Day of the Week, the Jewish Sabbath: That was a Weekly

Weekly Revolution, and then, every *Seventh Year* was a *Sabbatical Year*. And then, after *Seven Sevens of Years*, there was the *Jubilee*, every *Fiftieth Year*. Now, all this was a Figure of that Great *Sabbatism*, that remains to the People of God.

So the *Seventh*, both *Day*, and *Year*, and the *Seventh of Seven Years*, the *Seventh of Seven Weeks*, or *Weeks of Years*; that is, after every *Forty nine Years*, which is *Seven Sevens*; you know, the *Fiftieth Year* was a *Year of Jubilee*, and *Holy to the Lord*; A *Feast of Jubilee*, of *Great Freedom*, of *Great Redemption*, of *Great setting free*, both the *Persons* and *Estates* of *Men*; and all was to represent what the *Apostle* speaks of, *Heb. 4.9.* *There remaineth, &c. He went through all kind of Rests, that were under the Law*; and *ver. 9.* *Yet beyond all, There remaineth a Sabbatism, a Great Sabbatizing to the People of God.* So that this is the *Great Sabbatism*, that shall be held to God; It shall be in these *Thousand Years*: That's the *State of perfect Sabbatism*, wherein *Persons* shall not *speak their own Words*, *think their own Thoughts*, nor *do their own Actions*, but shall be the *Servants of God*, and of *Christ*, with *His Name upon their Foreheads*. Consider therefore this Expression of the *Apostle*, *ver. 9.* indeed we *Translate it*, (which is *Great Pity*, that it should be so *Disadvantageously Translated*) *There remains a Rest*; so we say. But the *Margin* being sensible (as it were) that They did wrong, in calling it only a *Rest*, gives the *Higher Style* of *keeping a Sabbath*; not only such a *Sabbath*, as the *Jews* kept, nor such a *Sabbath*, as *Christians* keep; but beyond all this, there Remains the *Blessed Festival* of a *Sabbath*, in which we shall be free from all the *Cumber*, both of *Worldly Business*, and also of *Corruption*, and *Misery*, and *Unhappiness*. This shall be the *Great Sabbatism* of the *Great Nuptials* of *Jesus Christ*, the *Great Nuptials* of the *Lamb*.

2. In the second place, There was the *Great Feast of Passover*: which was upon the *Deliverance* from the *Bondage of Egypt*. I will not spend any time to particularize it; you shall find, there was the *Feast of Passover*; of which, we read abundantly, in *Exod. 12.* And after the *Passover* was slain, there was the *Offering of the first fruits*. I'll give you a *Brief Account* of all according to the *New Testament*: There is to be the *Highest Passover* of that *Festival*, that is, A full *Table* of the *Redemption* of *Jesus Christ*: A *feasting on the Paschal Lamb*; the *Redemption* of our *Lord Jesus Christ*. For *Christ our Passover* is *sacrificed for us*, as the *Apostle* speaks; And in the *Evangelist*, when *Christ* had ordain'd the *Supper of the Lord*; even

after the ordaining of it. This Passeeover shall be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. As he said of that Fruit of the Vine, He would drink it new with them in the Kingdom of the Father. So he saith in the Evangelist Luke; This Passeeover shall be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God. That is, When we shall have the full Enjoyment of Jesus Christ, in his Redemption. For then the Paschal Lamb shall be set out to us in the Fullness of its Effect; in the Fullness and Greatness of His Redemption; As He gave Himself a Lamb without Spot, Sacrificed to God for us. That is, the Great Sense of our Saviour in those Words, *This Passeeover shall be fulfilled in the Kingdom of God.*

3. Thirdly, For the Feast of the First Fruits; You know, In two Regards, we may say, That it is a Feast of the first Fruits, or the Sheaf offered, both in regard of Christ, and also in regard of our selves: In regard of Christ, It is said, in the 1 Cor. 15. 23. *Christ the First Fruits, and they that are Christ's at his Coming; Every Man in his own Order, Christ the First Fruits, and they that are Christ's, at his Coming.* Then shall that Blessed First Fruits, Jesus Christ, the First-born of every Creature; The First Begotten from the Dead, He shall come forth in Glory of His Kingdom, and in the Glory of His Appearance. It is a Feast of the First Fruits, because then Christ, who is the first Fruits, comes forth in all His Glory, and in all His Blessedness. And, that it is the Feast of first Fruits, in regard of his Servants; I shall give you two Scriptures, and so pass off. James 1. 18. *Of his own will begat he us with the Word of Truth, that we should be a kind of first Fruits of his Creatures;* And, in Rev. 14. 4. These, (saith he, speaking of the Hundred forty and four Thousand that were Sealed) *These are the first Fruits to God, and to the Lamb.*

4. The fourth Feast; that we read of; It was the Feast of Weeks; As it is called in that, Lev. 23. And it was after seven compleat Sabbaths were past; Then there was a Feast, which is called Pentecost: And at that very Feast, was the great pouring Out of the Spirit of Christ upon the Disciples, Acts 2. 1. And so there shall be the Feast of the Harvest, of all the Servants of God, gathered in one after the Pouring out of that blessed Spirit of God. All this shall be much greater than that was in Acts 2. This was but a Beginning; It was but an Entrance of that which is to be done at the Feast of the Great Harvest.

Surely, never was there such a Feast of Pentecost; Such a Feast of Weeks, as shall be then; Every one, who shall be admitted to that Feast,

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His mouth shall be Full of the Wonderful works of God. He shall speak abundantly of the Glory of God, and of Jesus Christ, and of the Riches of Grace; He shall speak abundantly of the mighty Works of God, in that mighty *Pouring out of the Spirit of God.*

5. In the Fifth Place; There shall be the *Feast of Trumpets*. As we read, *Lev. 23.* After the *Feast of Weeks*, was the *Feast of Trumpets*. And that Feast was a Type of the *Seven Trumpets* in the *Revelation*, ending and fill'd up in the *Seventh Trumpet* that we read of, *Rev. 11.* The *Seventh Angel* sounded; and immediately there were loud *Voices* in Heaven, saying, the *Kingdoms of this World are become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ, and he shall Reign for ever and ever: ver. 15.* With which you may compare what is spoken in *1 Cor. 15. 52.* And in *1 Thes. 4. 16.* *Christ shall descend, the Trumpet shall sound, and the Dead shall be raised Incorruptible. And the Saints shall be changed. And he shall come down with the Shout and Voice of the Arch-angel, and with the Trumpet of God. Then shall that great Trumpet sound; And then shall be the Feast when all the Dead in Christ, and they that have slept In, and By Jesus, shall arise, and shall appear in Glory, and shall stand forth in that State of an Incorruptible Resurrection; And then is the Blessedness of the Saints changed, who live and remain here upon Earth. And here all the forenam'd Feasts are together united in one.*

6. In the Sixth Place; There shall be the *Day of Atonement*, the *Day of the great Atonement*. As we read, of that also: A *Day*; wherein God was reconciled, wherein the *Entrances into the Holy of Holies were opened*; All that was to be in the *Day of Atonement*. And so there shall be in the State of the *Wedding of Christ*; The *Feast of Atonement, of Reconciliation*, As the *Apostle* speaks, *Acts 3. 19.* *When the times of Refreshing and of Restitution shall come. Repent ye therefore, and be Converted, that your Sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord: In that Great Day of Atonement, and at the Great Wedding, All that make up the Lambs Wife shall meet there, if they have been Enemies before to God and Christ, they shall be Atton'd: They'll lay aside their Enmity one to another, and fall into mutual Kindness, and Enjoyment one of another; Then, all things, as the *Apostle* speaks, *Col. 1.* *All things in Heaven and in Earth shall be fully Reconciled by Him, Even by Him.**

6. The last is, The *Feast of Tabernacles*; The *Feast of a Paradisiacal State*. The *Feast of Tabernacles*, The *Feast of Goodly Boughs of Olives,*

Olives, and Palms, And whatsoever was most valuable among the Plants, was brought out to make Boughs with, at that time. And to this the great Feast of the Kingdom of Christ is compared; Because it shall be the State of Paradise Restored: All the Glory, and Beauty, and Excellency of the Creation, shall then be restored. We read, therefore, *Zech. 14. 16, &c.* of this Happy and Blessed Feast of Tabernacles: It is when all shall be Holiness to Jehovah. And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the Nations which come against Jerusalem, shall even go up from Year to Year, to Worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. It is the Feast of that State of Paradise, where, Instead of Briars, and Thorns, shall come up the Fir-Tree, and the Mistle-Tree. And it shall be to the Lord for a Name, and for a Perpetual Remembrance. *Ezay 55. 13.*

I shall now Briefly shut up all this, in Application. And I desire you, that you would refresh these things in your own Thoughts; And that you would bring them to mind: You will find every particular Feast, that of the Passover, *Exod. 12.* You'll find at large; and every other Feast in *Lev. 23.* And, I desire you would consider, and read that Chapter; And remember, that the Glory, and Happiness, and Blessedness, and Spirituality of those Feasts shall be in the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Use, 1. The first use therefore that I would make of it, shall be this; To make a present Invitation to you to this Great Feast, that is to be held to the Lord our God; Even to Jehovah: That you would mind this; That you would seriously mind it, and consider it, that all of us are now Invited: For now, when we may go (as in that, *Matth. 22.*) One to our Market; Another to our Farm: Every one to this, or that Entertainment of this World; At this very Time, the Invitation is made to every one of us, that we would consider of it.

Behold, this Sermon, and this Discourse, this Preaching of the Gospel, it is sent to you, to invite you to this great Supper: *He sent forth his Servants, (ver. 3.)* That is, the Ministers and Preachers of the Gospel, the Expounders and Openers of Scripture to you, to call you, and to bid you unto this Wedding. Now take heed! Take heed! That you do not go, one to your Farm, and another to your Merchandize, that you don't go every one your own way: As it is said, *They made light of it, and went their way; They go every one their own way:* Take heed now, Remember, when that Wed-
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ding-Supper shall be, and that it shall then be Proclaimed with that sound of the *Trumpet*, with the *Voice of the Arch-ang l*, Blessed are they that are bidden then to the *Marriage-Supper of the Lamb*; If any be bidden, They must be bidden now; They must be perswaded now, they must accept the Invitation at this very time. For, now it is, as I tell you, You may go to your Farm, and to your Merchandise, &c. Every one your own way: Now is the Invitation made, and now it is to be taken; Now it is to be closed with, now it is to be accepted: Hearken therefore, every Soul, that hears this Discourse. Behold, thou art bidden to the *Marriage-Supper of the Lamb*: Thou art invited to that Great Feast of the *Kings Son*: Thou art earnestly perswaded, that thou wouldest be present there, and that thou wouldest partake of the Splendor, Glory, and Magnificence, and of the Happiness of that Day: Take heed now, that thou don't make *Light of it*, and say, what's this to me? You will certainly Repent it another day; You will fall to *Weeping, Wailing, and Gnashing of Teeth*, that you would not be perswaded, when you were thus Graciously bidden by Jesus Christ, and by the Voice of his Word, and the Voice of his Gospel.

Therefore hearken to this Invitation; Hear, whoever it be; As it is said, *Isa. 55*. Where there is a great Description of this very Kingdom, of this very State of Paradise: As you may find, in the last Verse. *Instead of the Thorn shall come up the Fir-Tree, and instead of the Brier shall come up the Mistle-Tree: And it shall be to the Lord for a Name, and for an Everlasting Sign that shall not be cut off.*

Now Ho, every one that Thirsteth: So the Chapter begins; As you know, we make publick Sounds and Proclamations; So, Ho, every one that Thirsteth, come ye to the Waters, &c.

Wherefore do ye spend your Money for that, which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not, &c? And, if any should say, this is nothing but only a Noise of Words, and of Discourse; saith God (ver. 9.) *As the Fleecient are higher than the Earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. For as the Rain cometh down, and the Snow from Heaven, and returneth not thither, but Watereth the Earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give Seed to the Sower, and Bread to the Eater; So shall my word be that goeth out of my Mouth; It shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereunto I sent it.* Therefore, assure your selves, that this

Word,

Word, It will not return in vain; It will prosper to that very End. You may be sure, such a Feast there is to be: Therefore, take great care concerning your selves, what you will do about it, how you will order your selves about it.

Use. 2. In the Second Place, I shall point out to you, how you may prepare your selves: You must take care of this;

First of all, that you get a *Wedding-Garment*. As it is said, *Mat. 22. He saw one there, that had not on a Wedding-Garment. And he said unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having a Wedding-Garment? And he was speechless.* The Man was so confounded, he was so ashamed of the thing, that he had nothing at all to say. *The King came in to see his Guests, and he saw a Man that had not on a Wedding Garment;* The Man had nothing to say, he knew there was no Reason for him to say any thing. And what is this *Wedding Garment*? It is, an interest in Christ, an Interest in His Righteousness, a being Cloathed in *Linnen, White, and Pure, washed in the Blood of the Lamb.*

And tho the Person did not despise the *Wedding*. He made a Profession, as we do, of Christianity, to come to it: Yet in the next verse (*ver. 13.*) *The King said to his Servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer Darkness; And There shall be Weeping, and Gnashing of Teeth; For, many are called, but few are chosen.*

Therefore, look diligently to this thing; That tho you seem to speak fair, you will come, and you will be there, and you do make a pretence; And yet you have not the *Wedding Garment*, Christ, and his Righteousness; Oh, how sad will it be!

In the Second Place; You must look diligently to this too; That you have *Oyl in your Vessels*, and not onely in your Lamps. This you see, is in *Matth. 25. The Foolish Virgins never thought of Oyl in their Vessels, but onely in their Lamps.* That is, you must have Grace, you must have a Holy and Spiritual Life from Christ. That will be able to last out, and to endure that very Time. But I shall not speak more of it; Because I shall come in a full Discourse to Treat of it.

Use. 3. The third use I would have you make, is, I would have you observe, and consider but a little, How this Notion of a Feast, hath been Corrupted, by the *Anti-christian World*. What a Company of Feasts have there been, of Man's Institution? The Feast of such a Saint, and such a Saint; and Feasts that never were appointed

made by God: Yet they have come into use, and they remain in observation: And how came this?

It is by that Counterfeit Christianity, *Antichristianism* came in, Feasts that never were ordain'd by God. And, I wish, with all my heart, there were not Reason to bewail, nor the *Anti-christian* World onely, but even our *Protestant* Profession: There's nothing looks more Scandalous, and more Strange, than setting up *Feasts*, that the Gospel never appointed, nor Instituted; I say, I pray with all my heart, that they that have Power and Authority in these things may consider it. For, when *Jereboam* departed from the purity of Religion, Instituted by God, in the Old Testament; He made *Feasts*, and *Times* of his own.

So the Christian World hath done: And the Relicks, and Refuse of it are still among us: We keep up Times that never were appointed, That there's no mention, nor Signature of, in the Gospel. I do not speak any way, to desire to Reflect, or to be Cenforious, but to speak the Truth of things, according to the Word of God: For, it is onely of *Jehovah* himself, to appoint his own *Feasts*. And He hath kept up to us *The Feast of the Lord's Day*, and the *Feast of the Lord's Supper*, as Preparatory to that Great *Festival of the Kingdom of Christ*: And no other are we to make, nor to Devise, of our own Hearts.

Off. 4. The Fourth, and Last Application is this;

That you would seriously consider this *Marriage of the Lamb*, this Great *Feast*, how near it is. For, as the *Jews* were mighty careful to keep Account of Days, and the Motion of Times, and Weeks; They were to Account (as Scripture Expression is, *Lev. 23. 15*. In that Case) so we ought to Account the Time.

And, methinks, it is a very great Amazement, and a very great Sadness; That there should be no more Diligence nor Care, Neither in the Publick Ministry of the Gospel, nor in Private Christians, to Count the Time, and to know how near it is to this Great *Festival*: For, tho you may think you are Excused, Because it is said, *Watch, for ye know not the Time*; Yet I shall shew you, That hath quite another sense; And that it speaks, that every one should look, that they have the Truth of Grace, and Oyl in the Vessel, and the *Wedding Garment*.

This is the *Watchfulness*, that the Spirit of God confines us to. But, in the mean time, we ought to be upon our *Watch-Tower*, and to know the Times appointed by God; For, it is great Hypocrisie,

(However we may think it Great Modesty) that we do not *Discern the Signs of the Times*; To be Instructed in the *Times*, from the Signs the Scripture hath given us, from Time to Time: That we may come to know, when this Great *Coming of the Kingdom of Christ* shall be; And that our Hearts may be greatly preparing, and in a Readiness for that *Great Day*, &c. is one Branch of the great Duty of *Waiting for his Appearance*.

SERMON V.

Near the Time of the Shaking in London, &c.

On *Matth. XXV. Ver. 1. and so on to Ver. 13.*

Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto Ten Virgins, which took their Lamps, and went forth to meet the Bridegroom.

THE Words that I shall place the present Discourse upon, are those, *Viz. While the Bridegroom Tarried, while the Bridegroom delayed; While the Bridegroom Delayed his coming, While He whiled out the Time; As we in our English Language speak, and as the Greek Word, $\chi\rho\nu\iota\zeta\epsilon\alpha\iota$ properly signifies: While the Bridegroom Delay'd, or Tarried, or spent Time; They all Slumbred and Slept.*

I have, you know, in this *Parable*, shewn you the Great Intention of it; That it Represents the Glory of that *Nuptial Feast*, That *Wedding*, That *Marriage of the Lamb*. And I have already opened the several Preparatory Particulars in it.

I shall now at this Time Discourse upon what I have propos'd; *The Bridegroom Tarried*; And, so I shall endeavour to lay this Foundation,

That the coming of Jesus Christ hath not been, since He spoke this *Parable*, Neither is it yet immediately to be. *The Bridegroom Tarried*. And therefore, herein I shall endeavour to open to you,

First,

The Parable of the Ten Virgins

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First, How strange it is, according to Scripture-Discourse, that the coming of Christ has been so long delay'd.

And, I shall Answer to you, the Objections that arise from it against the Truth of Scripture, concerning the *Bridegroom's coming*; And so how this delay, and many Scriptures can be reconciled.

In the Second Place, I shall give you the two Great Reasons, especially, why the *Bridegroom's coming is Delay'd*. And then,

In the Third Place, I shall enquire the Signs, when this *Tarrying* of the *Bridegroom* is like to be at an End.

And, I shall endeavour so to Discourse this, as to resolve you concerning the Present Face of the World; That we are in a Time, you know all very well, of very great *Commotions* of the Nations, and as the Scripture Expression is: We hear of *Wars*, and *Rambours of Wars* continually: And, you know, God hath, both in other Nations, and in a part of this Nation (tho' beyond the *Sea*) given us Great Reason to consider that shaking of the Earth, that was so dreadful in a part of our Nation, tho' beyond the *Sea*; And that gentle Admonition, that he hath given us of it, so lately, in this very place. In this very City; I would therefore Discourse that point to you, how far we may look upon these, as Signs of the near *Coming of the Bridegroom*. And then, I shall close up the whole, in the Application of it.

I begin with the First: And that is, to Discourse to you, how strange it may seem, and disagreeable to Scripture, that the *Bridegroom* hath so long *Delayed his Coming*; And I shall remove the Objections against the Truth and Verity of Scripture, *Notwithstanding* the Delay of the coming.

First therefore, it seems very strange, that such an Evil State of the World should continue beyond the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ; Seeing there is such an Infinite Grace of God in a Mediator, and that he pleased to give his own Son to Lost Man, That whoever believes in him, should not perish, but have Eternal Life, It is no wonder, we may be ready truly to say, That the World continued till Christ came, till He Dyed, and Rose again, and till there was an Universal Preaching of the Gospel in His Name: But why should it last any longer? So Great a Thing was done Then in the World, that there can be no Expectation of such another. And therefore sure there was nothing now to do, but for Christ to have a Kingdom, as Great, and as Large, and as Glorious, as the Scripture assures he shall have.

For, as I have noted to you; and I desire that you would bear (as I have said before.) That Scripture in your Mind, Gal. 4. 4. *When the Fullness of Time was come, God sent forth his Son.*

It is no wonder that Time should last, till *The Fullness of Time came*: But that it should last beyond, is very strange; God sent forth his Son, made of a Woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the Adoption of Children. And God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son to all those that are his Children, to cry, Abba, Father. These were so Great Things, that till this Fullness, indeed, it is no Wonder at all, that God bore up the World; because he had such a Great Discovery of his Love, and of his Grace, to make; and by which Men had been Saved all along before, even the Fathers in the Old Testament: And by which, Salvation is to be alone expected and received. 'Twas no Wonder therefore, (I say) that God bore up the World to that Fullness of Time. But now, it is strange, that it should last any longer than that: It is Wonder there has not been a Kingdom of Redemption, and of Glory ever since.

But now, to Answer you in that Particular, and by a Place of Scripture, as Notable as *this Fullness of Time is*. There is another far Greater Appearance of the Glory of the Redemption of Christ; For you know, All That was in Humiliation; It was in an Incognito-State, in a Disguise of the Son of God, Humbling Himself into the Form of a Servant, and to Death, the Death of the Cross.

But All This is to Appear in Glory; And as there was a Fullness of Time for that First Manifestation of Christ; So there is (Ephes. 1. 10.) a Dispensation of the Fullness of Times (not only of Time, but of Times, or of All Time) That he might gather together in One, all things in Christ; both which are in Heaven, and which are in Earth, even in Him. Till that Date be come, the Kingdom of Christ cannot be.

Let me therefore desire of you, That you would keep these Two Places of Scripture always in your Thoughts, with Relation to the First Coming of Christ; and with Relation to his Second Glorious Coming and Appearance. There is the Fullness of Time; and Christ was Revealed first in That, as a Sacrifice Dying for Sinners. And there is the Fullness of Times, of All Time, wherein

wherein *all things in Heaven, and in Earth, are to be gathered together in Him, even in Him*; In which He is to appear, without Sin to Salvation, Heb. 9. Last.

A Second Thing that makes it seem very strange, that God should continue the World so long, even after *This Fullness of Time*, is this; Because *the Heart of God* (as I have often said to you) *cannot be to this World*; Though He allows some kind of State and Condition to his Servants in it; some Enjoyment, some Supports, some Presence of Himself, and of his Glory, and Grace in Christ; Yet it is far short of what is to be; Because This is a World that God cannot Love; and therefore the Glory of Things shall not be in the Present State of the World: Because, I say, it is a World that God cannot Love; As Christ said, *My Kingdom is not of this World*; not meaning, That it is not a Kingdom, that shall Appear, and be Visible in the Creation of God, in Heaven, and Earth, standing in all the Order and Beauty of it: That is not the meaning. But, *My Kingdom is not of this World*; That is, Not of this Present Corrupt State in it: It must come to that, That *Time shall be no more*, (as it is said, *Revel. the 10th.*) before the *Kingdom of Christ* can be. There must be not only the *Fullness of Time*, but *Time must be no more*, of such a kind as it hath been: And the *Fullness of Times* must come; And Then the *Kingdom of Christ* shall appear: But as yet, it cannot: For the Scripture witnesseth very plainly, and evidently to us, That though God gives his Servants Food, and Rayment, and Habitation, and gives to many of them, Great Conveniencies, and Enjoyments of this World; Yet it is not, because he loves the World, or likes their State and Condition in the World: For, (saith the Apostle James) *Ye Adulterers, and Adulteresses, Know ye not that the Friendship of this World is Enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a Friend of the World, is the Enemy of God.* James 4. 4.

You see what a Great Contest there is between God and the World: And it can never be comprimised; It can never be reconciled: *Whosoever will be a Friend of the World, is the Enemy of God.* And therefore, though we value the Things of the World at so High a Rate; and the Conveniencies of the World we make so Choice of; Yet, if we believe *This Great Oracle of Truth*; whoever will be a *Friend of the World, is the Enemy*;

Enemy of God: And, the Friendship of this World is Enmity with God.

O that we could carry the Thoughts and Considerations of This always upon our Minds! And so the Apostle John tells us the very same thing, 1 John 2. 15. *Love not the World, neither the things that are in the World: If any man love the World, the Love of the Father is not in him; For All that is in the World, the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life; It is not of the Father, but it is of the World.*

And because the VWorld is nothing but an Entertainment of Lust; and that God cannot love it; Therefore *the World passeth away*: The World is continually in a *Fleeting Condition*; It is passing away: All this Form and State of things, that we now see; the Order and Manner of Things now is hastening away as fast as it can.

But you will say, *Why does it not make more haste, when God doth not Love it, and when it is Enmity to Him?* And when, *If any Man Love this World, he is an Enemy to God, and the Love of the Father is not in Him?* O why should we make it as if it were an Everlasting State, when it is not? But why is God pleased to continue it thus long?

To that, the Answer is; Because, there is a Patience of God which is Exercised now in the World, and he will Exercise that Patience to the very last of the Time, he hath appointed to the World.

In regard of this, It is, as if God should say, it is true; I do not Love this World; I do not Love to see Wicked Men Rolling and Tumbling in it, in all the Pleasure, Voluptuousness, Enjoyment, and Merriment, wherein they live; I do not Love to see my Servants so taken up about it, and so apt to be Drawn, and Tempted with it, as they are; And yet, for all this, Notwithstanding it; I will let this World stand (saith God) that my patience may be known and understood: As the Apostle Peter speaks (2 Pet. 2. 9.) *The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some Men count slackness, but is long suffering to us-ward: Not willing that any should Perish, but that all should come to Repentance.* The meaning of which Expression, I cannot better expound to you, than by examining it, what a kind of patience it is, that is intended? For Wicked Men, they are wicked still, Notwithstanding, the Patience of God, and they will not Repent. And, God takes them away, one by one, as he sees Good. And the VWorld continues very bad,

had, from one Generation to another : And yet God Exercise his patience towards it. You may understand it, by comparing this Expression with the first part of the Chapter. They say (in ver. 4.) *Where is the promise of his Coming ? For since the Fathers fell asleep ; All things continue, as they were, from the beginning of the Creation. Since the Fathers fell asleep ; It is very Natural, to understand it of those first Long-living Patriarchs before the Flood : Since They fell asleep, and the Flood came, (say these Scoffers) There hath been no change of things here : The VWorld hath stood, just as it did from thence : And herein is the Patience of God, the VWorld was about One Thousand Six Hundred and Fifty Six Years, when the Flood came. Now in Every such Generation of the World, Every Thousand Years of the World, God hath had as Great Reason to Destroy the World, as he had Then : For, Wickedness hath Grown to such an Heighth, as it did then. And yet for all this, God Exercises the Patience and Long-Suffering, that he doth not Destroy the World again and again ; and leave a few, as he did then, to people the World a-new.*

But he continueth Summer, and Winter, and Harvest, and the State of the World : He hath not Destroyed Every Living Thing, as He did then : Though there have been Notable Judgments in All Times, as I shall presently speak to you.

A Third Thing, that should make us very much wonder, That God should keep the World a-foot so long ; It is in Regard of the Great Insolence, and Boldness of Wicked Men. What a Boldness is this ! That they should say, *Where is the Promise of his Coming ?* And that they should find something or other to say, It is nothing, it is only a Thing that comes by Chance, or it is a Natural Cause, that the World continues.

Now, let it be granted, That it is only a Natural Cause ; Who is the Great Ruler, and Conductor of Natural Causes, but God ? And who hath suited Natural Causes to Times and Seasons, but God ? Let the greatest Atheist find out as Good Natural Causes, as he can : As for Example, the Causes of the Great Earthquake at Jamaica : There is nothing, not the least Thing, that comes to pass, but by His Wisdom, and by his Power ; And that it goes so far, and no farther, It is fully attributed to be to himself, and to no other.

And

And therefore, I beseech you, keep, as an *Antidote* against all the Atheistical Talk that you meet with in the World; concerning these Things; keep continually in your Mind what we read of, in the Book of *Daniel*. Several times indeed we read of Great Things spoken of God. *Dan. 3.* *Nebuchadnezzar* made This Acknowledgment to God: *Whoever (saith he) shall speak a word against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, shall be cut in peeces.* He owned, and was convinced of such a Mighty Power of God, that he would not endure there should be a Mouth opened against him.

Indeed, It were very well, if Christian Nations would learn by the Example of an *Heathen Prince*, That they would not suffer the Tongue of *Atheists* to walk about so briskly as it does in the World: They set their Mouths against the Heavens; and their Tongue rangeth through the whole Earth, as the Expression is in the *Psalms*. I say, 'Twere well that the Mouths of *Atheists* were stoppt, and that they had such notice from the Supreme Powers, that they might be Daunted, and afraid to Dishonour the Great God of Heaven and Earth, and to make nothing of his Name, and the Works he doth in the World. So in the 24th Verse of the 4th of *Daniel*, *Nebuchadnezzar*, This *Heathen Prince*, says: *I Nebuchadnezzar lift up mine Eyes unto Heaven, and mine Understanding returned unto me; And I blessed the most High, and I praised, and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose Dominion is an Everlasting Dominion, and his Kingdom is from Generation to Generation: And all the Inhabitants of the Earth are reputed as nothing; and he doth according to his Will in the Armies of Heaven; and among the Inhabitants of the Earth: and none can stay his Hand:* That's a great Expression, that I desire you to keep in your Minds; *None can stay his Hand:* He can stay it Himself, but no other can stay it.

I would desire you but to consider, in regard of the late Remarkable Providence toward This City: Of which, most People (I perceive) were Sensible; some in Greater, and some in Lesser Degree: This Place of Scripture does very much affect my Thoughts concerning it: *Who can stay God's Hand?* If He had said, *Let it tear up the Foundations of this City, and the Houses in it,* who could have stay'd his Hand? I beseech you consider, Why might it not have been so much more, as well

Is so much, or so little? And yet Men are ready to say, Because God did no more, he could do no more, except Natural Causes had been prepared to go on, and to go further; And because the Earth Did give a kind of a Little Nodd, and no more, We are not sensible of the Great Hand of God; and who it was that was pleased to stay his Hand: It was His Own Grace, and His own Mercy, to stay his Hand: As if he should say, I'll let you see the Danger, and no more than Just let you see it: And therefore, *O that Men would praise the Lord for his Goodness, and for his Wonderful Works to the Children of Men!* And that they would stand in Awe of Him, and consider his Doings. For God forbears (you see) with an Infinite Patience and Long-Suffering: He lets Men Open their Mouths against Himself, and does not cut them off in the very moment, through his Mercies.

But, if you say, Will God always put up these Wrongs and Reproaches? Shall Right to this Great Name of God never be done?

Yes, He will make the World sensible of Him by Repentance: Or else there's a Day of Dreadful Recompence; As if God should say, I have Time enough; I have an Eternity to shew my Displeasure upon Them in; *I have it Seal'd in my Treasures; Their Foot shall slide in Due Time;* And therefore I'll bear with them a little Time; Because *There's a Day of Perdition of Ungodly Men;* As the Apostle Peter speaks, *2 Peter 3. The Day of the Lord will come.* Men say; Where is it? Saith the Apostle, (Verse 10.) *The Day of the Lord will come.* And there is a *Reserving of Heaven and Earth unto Fire,* against that Day, and the Perdition of ungodly men.

And then, There is a Gracious Purpose of God: I desire that you would take notice of that Place; Which ought indeed to be very much upon our Thoughts, in this very regard; That it is Prophesied, and foretold, *That they shall come from the Ends of the Earth,* Jer. 16. 20. *Saying, Shall a Man make Gods unto himself, and they are no Gods? Therefore behold, I will this once.* It is a very notable Expression; Like that of *Shaking Heaven and Earth,* yet once more (saith the Apostle) *I shake not the Earth only, but also Heaven; That those things which cannot be shaken may remain; And that the things which can be shaken may be taken away at once: Therefore behold, I will this once cause them to know,*

I will cause them to know mine hand, and my might, and they shall know that my Name is the Lord. And this seems to be a Gracious and a Merciful Intention; For in Verse 16. *O Lord my Strength and my Fortrefe, and my Refuge in the Day of Affliction, the Gentiles shall come unto thee from the Ends of the Earth, and shall say, surely our Fathers have Inherited Lies, Vanities, and things wherein there is no profit.* Jeremy apprehends great Grace in God upon this Prospect, and so applies to Him in his own Case, *O Lord my Strength, &c.*

So you may see why God bears the Reproaches of them, that condemn him; Wherefore do the Wicked condemn God? Saith God, I'll have a Day of Perdition for Ungodly Men: And I'll have a Day, when the Gentiles shall come from the Ends of the Earth: And for once, they shall know my Might, and my Power; And that my Name is Jehovah. I'll bring all mine Home, my Patience is for them, that they might not Perish, but come to Repentance, &c.

A Fourth thing that makes it very strange, that God continues the World so long, is, Because there are so many Prayers of his Saints for the Kingdom of Christ, to come; And that the Wickedness of the Wicked may be brought to an End; And that the Oppression and Persecution of his Church may be at an End. It is a wonder therefore, that God should not hear the Prayers of his Servants, and bring all these things to their great Issue.

But now, our Lord Jesus Christ hath given us an Account of this, *Luk. 18. 7, 8.* And shall not God avenge his own Elect, which cry Day and Night unto him, tho he bear long with them? I tell you, that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall he find Faith on the Earth? He will avenge them speedily, tho he tarry long.

You may think, those things Contradict one another; To tarry long, and yet to avenge them speedily: Yet he will come, and he will avenge.

As it was said concerning the Souls under the Altar; *Stay, till the rest of your Brethren are filled up;* And then there shall be Vengeance indeed to the Enemy; and a Recompence to his Servants; And yet how little Faith concerning this even among the Servants of God!

The last thing why you may think it very strange, is this; Because

Because the Apostle said so long ago, *The Ends of the World* were come, I confess, it may seem to give an *Atheist* some hold, some advantage; You know how many places of Scripture speak to this purpose, *1 Cor. 10. 12.* Saith the Apostle, *All these things happened unto them for Ensamples: And they are Written for our Admonition, upon whom the Ends of the World are come:* And (saith the Apostle *John*) *This is the Last time, and hereby we know it, this is the last hour: And these are the last Days;* All this is spoken, and yet for all this, the Kingdom of Christ hath not come: And Sixteen Hundred Years, and more are passed, since these things have been spoken.

Now Indeed, these things look very strange, and might make Men think, that there is no such thing, as the *Coming of Christ*; For tho the Apostles Preached it, and they may say, indeed, Men that are Preachers, may perswade Men so; And indeed, they say so; But we see nothing coming to pass; Did not the Apostle *John* speak of the *last Day*, the *last Hour*, and the *last Time*? And the Apostle *Peter*, of the very *last of Times*? As the word is very Emphatical in the *Greek*; And yet for all that, it is not come.

To all this, I would only say these two things; Or rather, give you two places of Scripture, how these things come to pass, In the *2 Thes. ch. 2. v. 3.* The Apostle tells us plainly, there was such a Noise (as I may so express it) of the Doctrine of the Apostles, concerning the *last Times*; That all Christians then were upon the Expectation, were upon the Gaze, when that *Coming of Christ* should be: Now, saith the Apostle, *Let no Man deceive you by any means; For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first. Except there be an Apostacy in the Christian Church first, That Day shall not come.* And therefore, don't wonder, tho it be called the *last Time*, in regard of the *Fullness of Time*, and Christ coming at it, and because of the last of the four *Monarchies*; Yet it is not so the *last Time*, but that it must give Room to an *Apostacy* to come upon it: And so in the *Revelation*, as I have often spoken to you. *Chap. 11.* And in the *12th* and *13th* Chapters. There are to be *Time, Times, and Half a Time: A Thousand two Hundred, and Sixty Days: Forty and two Months.* All which (as I have said often to you) make up *Twelve Hundred and Sixty Years*, between the Preaching of the Gospel, the Christian Empire, and the coming of Jesus Christ: And

So I have spoken of the first thing, why there may arise such thoughts upon this, that the *Kingdom of Christ* is not come yet to this very Day. I come now to the second thing, to give you very Great Reasons, besides what I have intimated already to you, *Why Christ hath not yet come.*

1. The First Account I would give, is, That so very Agreeable Representation of the Time of the Duration of the Creation; and of the Kingdom of Christ in Compare with it: The Apostle Peter hath Given in his Second Epistle c. 3. 8. when he was speaking of the *Coming of Christ*, and of the Long Delay of it; at which Atheists took Advantage, and Antichristian Scoffers, to play upon it; Saying, *Where is the Promise of his Coming?* The Apostle Resolves the Objection, by pressing Earnestly on Christians, not to be *Ignorant of One Thing*, or not to let it lie *Hid from them*; *Viz. That One Day is with the Lord as a Thousand Years*; Referring to Each Day of the Creation, Designed by God, as a Type of a Thousand Years Duration of the Creation; They being then Six, before the Seventh, then Sanctified and Blessed by God as a *SABBATH*, the Type of the Grand Sabbath; They pourtray Six Thousand Years Duration of the Creation, before the Great Sabbathism of the Kingdom of Christ; And that being Given under the Representation of a Thousand Years, Revel. 20. Yet those Thousand Years are in the Designation of God, That *One Day of the Lord*, That *Illustrious Day*, That *Day of Judgment*, The *Great Day*, The *Day*; if then Jesus Christ comes, in the End of the Fourth Millenary, or Thousand, of Years, as in the *Fullness of Time*; And God hath Laid out Six Thousand for the Duration of the World until that Thousand Years, (Except what *Shortning* shall be for the *Elects* Sake, in the End of the Sixth Millenary) as the *Fullness of Times*, or of *All Time*; It is very Evident, The Coming of the *Bridegroom*, after His Death, and Resurrection, must be under the Delay of about Two Thousand Years; as have now Already so near Run out.

Argum. 2. If there be such a Number of the Elect to be brought Home to God, and to Christ; And that They have lain scattered through these near Two Thousand Years, and must be brought in before the Kingdom of Christ; Then the Kingdom of Christ cannot be, till they are Brought in. But so

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the Apostle sheweth, Heb. 4. 4, 5, 6, 7, &c. Some must Enter into Rest, to the last. And of this the Apostle Peter speaks in the same Discourse, as a Further Resolution of the Scoffers Question, *Where is the Promise of His Coming?* The Lord is not Slack concerning his Promise; as some Men count Slackness; but is Long-Suffering to us, not willing that Any should perish, but that All should come to Repentance, Verse 9.

That This hath, in some General Latitude, a Respect to All Men, I would not Deny; but that is the Lowest, and Least Part of its Intention; For so it hath not its Efficacy, nor its Effect; but take it with Relation to the Elect of God, And so it hath Full Effect; Not One Perishes, but Every Single One comes to Repentance. If therefore there is such a Number of Elect to be Brought Home to Repentance, who shall have their Lot in the Kingdom of Christ at his Coming: His Coming then must needs be Delayed till All the Children of the Bride-Chamber be Brought into a Condition to meet the Bridegroom with Oil in their Vessels, as well as in their Lamps.

Argum. 3. There is such a Space of Time Determined by God, Settled, Fixed and Declared in the Sure Word of Prophecy, Lin'd out by Four Monarchies, that must Run out Themselves; And there is a Particular Assignment of Time to the Last State of the Fourth, the Last of Them; *Viz.* Time, Times, and Half a Time, Expounded into One Thousand Two Hundred and Sixty Days of Years, Revel. 12. 6. 14. And in this Time Wickedness Fills up its Ephah, or Measure; and is carried as by the Wings of a Stork, and Settled for Ever upon its own Base: And to this Assignment of Time, Jesus Christ Consented, and Testified his Consent, by Lifting up Both his Hands to Heaven, and Swearing, There should be this Time, Times and Half: And therefore no Injury is Done to Him: And that then, and not before, All the Wonders of his Kingdom shall be Finished. On this very Account the Apostle so Solemnly Declares, 2 Thess. 2. 1, &c. That That Day of Christ could not come, Except that Apostacy, the Last State of the Fourth Monarchy, was Revealed, and Blown off by the Spirit of Christ's own Mouth, and at Last, utterly Consumed by the Brightness and Glory of his Appearance, at that his Coming: Before it could come to this, those Times and Half must be Expired: Immediately therefore after the Death and Resurre-

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tion of Christ, *Right and Prophecy were Sealed*, Daniel 9. 24. with Relation to that *Conquest and Richest Right of Prophecy*; viz. the Kingdom of Christ it was Sealed: But then immediately, at the very Beginning of *Half Time*, Christ took the First Opportunity of making a Seizure; viz. at the Reformation, and of *Swearing*, there should be Time of such sort no more; but in the Days of the Seventh Trumpet; When he shall begin to sound the *Mystery of God*, viz. The Kingdom of Christ, shall be Finishing, as he hath spoken by all his Servants the Prophets: Which shall begin at 1697, So near approaching; All which things have been fully, by the Assistances of God, made out, and publickly set forth; And are now onely so far briefly Represented, as to give satisfaction to this doubt; How comes it to pass, that the Coming of the Bridegroom hath been thus long Delay'd? And no further Insisted upon in these Sermons Set for Preaching the Gospel, especially (under the Grace of the Divine Spirit) to work upon the Heart, and to engage in all Holiness of Conversation; I come therefore to the Practical Reflection, on what hath been spoken, in these short Applications:

Appli. 1. That we would take heed of the *Atheistick*, and prophane boldness of *Scoffers*; Who, because the Bridegroom on so Holy and Wise Reasons, as Scripture hath given us, *Delays his Coming*, say, where is the promise of his Coming? They believe no such thing; And indeed, all Discourses against the Kingdom of Christ, and the Prophecies of Scripture, or turning them into Allegory, and Metaphor, Give Countenance, and Assurance to such Prophanenels, and Boldness of Scoffing; Let us therefore be mindful of the Words of the Holy Prophets, and of the Doctrines of the Apostles, of the Lord and Saviour, 2 Peter c. 3. v. 1, &c.

Appli. 2. Let us beware of the Accounting the delay of the Bridegrooms Coming to any thing in the Course of Nature, or, as if the World could bear up it self, or Perpetuate it self; As they of whom the Apostle speaks, who are willfully Ignorant, that the World by the very Word of God, was settled so out of, and yet in such a Neighbourhood to the Water; that it depended wholly on the Word of his Power, not to be overflowed by it: And that the Heavens and Earth that now are, are so Reserv'd, are Treasur'd up for Fire at the Time Appointed by God, for Perdition of such, and of All Ungodly Men;

Men: That we may be in a continual Dependence upon Him, and Preparation for the Bridegroom's Coming.

Applicat. 3. Let us have just Apprehensions of the *Patience*, and *Long-Suffering* of God, in the Delay of the Bridegroom's Coming: And that it is no *Slackness* concerning his Promise, As if He were altogether such a one as our Selves. And Let us Account it *Salvation*; And so it will be, if we are His: For He will let None of His Perish, but Every One of Them shall come to Repentance. But if we are not His, though we Know it not, Yet His Goodness Leads to Repentance, by its Gracious Invitations, and Excitements: And if through our *Hard*, and *Impenitent* Hearts, It does not Lead us in, we *Treasure up Wrath* against the Day of Wrath, and the Revelation of the Righteous Judgment of God at this Coming of the Bridegroom, Rom. 2. 3, 4, 5.

Applicat. 4. Let us not Think it Boldness, or Presumption, to Search the Scriptures; and, as Peter 1. 19, &c. to Give Heed to the Sure Word of Prophecy, as to a Light that shineth in a Dark Place, Till the Day Dawn, and the Day-Star Rise in our Hearts; Especially to that Line, of *TIME*, Times, and Half Time: For our Lord charges it as Hypocrisie, not to Discern the Signs of the Times, That is, the Characters of Time, Scripture hath Impres'd upon it: And though there are many Providential Signs, as Wars, Commotions, Earthquakes, Yet these will not Define Time to us; Onely the Line of Time can Do that: And let us Humbly wait upon God therein; and take in All Other Marks God hath Given by His Providence therein.

But, as I say, *The Line of Time is the Sure Rule by which we are to walk*; and I have full Assurance, if we behold, according to that, the Course of Scripture-Prophecies, the Emblems, or Prophetical Types and Figures given therein, the Numbers of Time proportion'd to, and Running all along from Time to Time, through those Figures, and compare All with the Providences, and Great Events God hath taken Care should be Recorded in History, brought to our Knowledge, or be coming down to our very sight, we may be fully Confirmed, as by a Threefold Cord, not to be Broken, and that it is a Line Reaching to 1697.

Applicat. 5. Let us have Continual Apprehensions of the Glory, and Greatness of That Day; Let us consider That Day

Day, Malac. 3. 18. *When ye shall Return, and Differ between the Righteous and the Wicked; Him that Serveth God, and Serveth Him not; Him that Swareth, and Him that Feareth an Oath; and between the Wise, and the Foolish Virgins; and not put off the Thoughts of it; Because we see the World so Earnest in Eating and Drinking, Buying and Selling, Building, and Planting, Marrying, and Giving in Marriage; For so it was in the Days of Noah, and of Lot, until the very Day: And so our Lord saith, It shall be in the Day of the Son of Man.*

Applicat. 8. Let us so Consider, and Apply our Selves to the Examining, what manner of Men we ought to be in All Holiness, and Godliness of Conversation, and therein to Look for, and to Haste on to the Day of God; and with the Spirit, and under his Influences; and with the Bride-like Affection, Cry out, as Hearers mov'd with an Holy Sympathy or Likeness of Affection, Even Cry out in Harmony, *Come, Lord Jesus, Come Quickly.*

SERMON

S E R M O N VI.

On *Matthew 25. v. 1.*

Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto Ten Virgins, which took their Lamps, and went forth to meet the Bridegroom, &c.

I Have in several Discourses, led you through the great Importance, and Sense of our Lord in this Parable: Which is one of those, wherein (as he speaks, *Matth. 13.*) he opened his Mouth in Parables, and uttered Things that had been kept secret from the foundation of the World.

I have spoken of several particulars herein; and will go directly upon what is now before us, and to be spoken of: and that is,

That while the Bridegroom tarried; all these Virgins, both the wise, and the unwise, slumbred and slept.

Now, it is indeed, a great difficulty to find out the very meaning and sense of our Lord in this part of the Parable: For, it seems strange, that not only the *unwise*, but that the *wise Virgins slumbred and slept.*

And, to give a sense of this, suitable to the meaning, and to the rest of the Parable, I shall at this time, by the assistance of God, undertake; and so to Discourse of it accordingly.

I observe therefore to you, That here are two Words used by our Lord: They *slumbred*, and they *slept*. I look upon these Words to have two very different senses, though they may seem to be perfectly alike, And that *slumbring* and *sleeping*, (as indeed, Scripture and common Language, generally join both together) mean one and the same thing.

But, I understand the First, concerning the spiritual state of the Churches of Christ, during the delay of Christs coming, and of the Kingdom of Christ. All the whole state of the Christian Church, hath been from the very beginning of the *working of the Mystery of Iniquity*, it hath been in a *slumbring* condition.

But then, the *sleeping*, I look upon that to be an expression

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of the dying of the Servants of Christ, all along, from the Time of the Resurrection of Christ, to this very Time; And the latter is consequent upon the former.

For, I am fully perswaded, That if the Power and Glory, and vigour of Christianity; in a settled state of Christianity; if that had immediately followed upon the Resurrection of Christ, and the giving of the Spirit, that pouring out of the Spirit that was in the Apostles days; I do fully believe, there had been no such Thing as dying: Even as when the Kingdom of Christ comes, there shall be no more Death; So, if the Kingdom of Christ had immediately proceeded, upon the first Preaching of the Gospel, there had been no sleeping: If there had been no *slumbring*, there had been no *sleeping*.

And, I shall give you two great Reasons, why I understand the Word *sleeping*, concerning *dying*: They *slumbred*; that is, the Power of Christianity did not shew it self upon them; And so they *sept*, that is, they *died*.

The first Reason I would give you of it is this, Because the Intention of our Lord, in this Parable, is chiefly, That we may look to the Power of Christianity in our own hearts, to such a power of it, as that we should be able to appear with Christ when he comes to the *Wedding*; That our *Lamps* should not then go out. The great Meaning, the great Scope of the Parable is this, That we should look to have the very Life, and Truth of Grace, so in our hearts, that we may have a Light of it when Christ comes, that will not go out in the very time, in that very instant Time, wherein we should go with him to the *Wedding*.

Now, it is very plain, That the *Wise Virgins* indeed, had this Light: For, it is said of them (*ver. 10.*) They that were ready (which is spoken of the *wise Virgins*) they went in with him to the Marriage, and the Door was shut.

So that if the *wise Virgins* had *sept* in that sense, that the *foolish Virgins* did; I say, if they had *sept* in the same sense, they would not have been ready to go into the *Wedding* with Christ. So that these *wise Virgins*, they did *watch*, and they did not sleep in the main sense of the Parable: For, they were ready to go in with him to the *Wedding*.

Altho therefore they did die, yet in the great concernment of

of Eternity, they did not sleep away their time; they did not lose their opportunity of providing a Treasure of Oil.

A Second Reason that I give you, Why this sleeping is not meant of the spiritual estate of these *Virgins*, but only of their dying, is,

Because it is said, *At Midnight there was a Cry made; And then they arose and trimmed their Lamps.*

Now this Midnight is that state of death, in regard of the Body, in which all the servants of Christ lie, till that Resurrection, till that *First Resurrection* that is spoken of. This is indeed, like a *Midnight*. For, when the Bodies of Saints lie in the Dust, it is as if a Midnight were upon them, as to that visible state and appearance of Body; though their Spirits are indeed with Christ, yet their Bodies lie as in a *Midnight*.

And, if you speak of the Apostles of Christ, *Peter, Paul, John*, and the rest of them; they are all of them (as it were) in a *Midnight* sleep, as to their Bodies, And therefore, the *Midnight* is so properly to be understood; Whereas, in regard of the Spiritual State of the Church of Christ, which is before his Coming, before the Glory of his Coming, it shall not be a *Midnight*.

For, as I have often endeavoured to make plain unto you, That as soon as ever those *Time, Times and half Time* of the Antichristian Power are at an end, immediately, a great Light, and a great Glory of the Gospel shall shine out, that it shall not be a *Midnight*; Indeed, the *Light* will not be perfectly clear, or precious, till the Glory of the Kingdom of Christ.

But I cannot but hope and expect, That within very few years, there will be such a state of Christianity, such a state of the Gospel; the *Everlasting Gospel* preached through the World; There will be such a new Mission and Commission of the Servants of Christ, That it shall not be to be accounted a *Midnight* in that regard: Nor shall the Coming of Christ be so on the sudden, but that there will be great Light concerning it; When that *Angel* that flies through the midst of Heaven, (*Rev. 14.*) shall have preach'd the Everlasting Gospel to every Nation, &c.

These are the Reasons why I cannot understand this Word *sleeping*, to be a representation of the spiritual state

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of the Church, and Servants of Christ; But, I do understand by the *slumbring*, That there is such a *deadish*, such a *drowsie*, such a *benumbed* state of Christianity, as indeed we see in the very best, to this day.

Therefore the Observation that I shall lay down, and endeavour to open to you, is this:

That Christianity, in regard of the present state of Christians, and as they have been since Ephesus (Rev. 2.) left its first love; since there was a decay of the Glory and Purity, and presence of the Gospel from the Apostles Time; Since then, I say, Christianity, in the Power and Spirit of it, though it hath not downright slept; yet it hath been, as in a slumber.

For indeed, I have often said it, and I cannot be in a remove from it; That Christianity is not as it was intended by Christ, it should be, We have not seen the State and Glory of it. And therefore I shall make it my business to represent to you, by such Representations as the Scripture hath given us, how the Power of Christianity hath faultred thus long; and that it will come to its perfectly awakened State, when the *Kingdoms of this World* are *Proclaimed to be the Lord's and his Christ's*.

And I shall date this failure, especially to two Times; and one of them will fall directly upon our selves.

First of all, the Time when the *Mystery of Iniquity* was *working* in the Apostles days.

For, you may plainly behold that, by the very expresse words of the Apostle; that in his own Time, there was a *working of the Mystery of Iniquity*; Then began the great decay and bringing down of the Glory of Christianity, 2 *Thes. 2.* 'Tis a Scripture that I have often turned you to, and therefore I hope you are acquainted with it. I am perswaded, the first Christians in the Apostles days, needed as much to be restrained, in thinking that the *Day of Christ was at hand*, as we have need to be spurr'd on, and to be provoked, and to be earnestly perswaded to think, that *the Day of Christ is at hand*.

For, so the Apostle writes, *We beseech you*, saith he, as if he was in a business of greatest earnestness, and that he could not tell how he should prevail enough upon them, to whom he wrote in it, *ver. 1. We beseech you, Brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him, That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by Spirit,*
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nor by Word, nor by Letter, as from us, as that the Day of Christ is at hand. They were ready to think, The Day of Christ was to come just then: Therefore the Apostle makes this earnest entreaty of them, that they would not expect it: You see what a different posture we are in now: It is a hard matter to persuade any one to take off their hearts from the World, and from loving it too deep, and from thinking here's a security in this World, and we may do as our Fathers have done before us, for so many Hundred Years in the Profession of Christianity: We may be buying and selling, and getting Estates, and laying a foundation in this World; Who is it, that doth not count it a sort of Madness, to dissuade them from such a thing?

But the Christians of that Time, they needed as earnest a persuasion, That they might not think that the Day of Christ was so near at hand. And so Christ, in the 19th of Luke, speaks that Parable that they should not, because they did think The Kingdom of Heaven was nigh at hand: He spake a Parable, on purpose to assure them, that it was not so nigh: But Alas! we need strong persuasions to the contrary.

And, I may say the contrary to the Christians of this Time, I beseech you Brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus, and by our gathering together unto him, that you would not be shaken in mind, by the general way of Peoples Profession, and Preaching and Hearing, as if the Day of Christ were not at hand. And as the Apostle saith, Let no man deceive you by any means, for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that Man of Sin be revealed, the Son of Perdition. So I say to you, That day is near approaching; For that falling away, that Apostacy from Christianity, it hath been, and it is now very near to its expiring: And therefore the great reason, why it could not be then, it is now a reason, why it must speedily be; because the Apostacy hath been so long; because the Time, and the last Date, by God, and by Christ is almost run out, and expired: that is, the Time, Times and half Time.

Here therefore, to speak and bring home the thing to the present purpose I am upon; Since this Apostacy began to work, since that very Time, Christianity hath been in a slumber. For, in this second Chap. v. 7. saith the Apostle, the Mystery of Iniquity doth already work. Now, as soon as ever the Myste-

ry of Iniquity began to work: immediately there began a slumber upon the Christian Religion: And therefore one would wonder, Indeed, it is a place that one would wonder to read, and to find, in the Epistle to the *Philippians*, what the Apostle speaks, Chap. 2. 20. *For I have no man (saith he) like-minded (speaking of Timotheus) who will naturally, genuinely, sincerely care for your state: For (saith he) All seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.*

I speak of him, as an extraordinary Person, saith the Apostle. By this we may plainly see, it was a great variation from what you read in the second and third Chapters of the *Acts*, where they minded nothing but only the Promotion of Christianity: *No one called any thing their own*; they minded nothing but Christianity itself. But Christianity hath been in a *slumber* ever since; or else we should be Christians of another Life, of another Spirit, of another Power; I say, were it not that Christianity hath been in a *slumber* so long.

And this is with a great deal of spiritual Wit; (if I may so speak) and a great deal of spiritual Elegancy set out to us in the Song of Solomon. I shall have occasion to make great recourse to the Description that is there given to us. *Sol. Song, c. 5. v. 2. I sleep, but my heart waketh; it is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, saying, open to me, my Sister, my Love, my Dove, my undefiled: for my Head is filled with Dew, and my Locks with the Drops of the Night.*

What's the meaning of this? Indeed, I know Men are ready to say, That these things are only Imaginations and Whimfies, and Apprehensions of ones own that speaks of them.

But I have found a clear Thread, and Line drawn from David's time, till the very Glorious Coming of Christ, in this very Song of Solomon. And I find, that the Time when the Apostacy came in, is just under the very description that we here have.

As therefore, when after a clear Day, a Sun-shiny-day, at Night, the Drops of Dew, you know, they fall thick upon the heads of those that are in the Air. So Christ doth declare, *A night should come*, at that time upon his Church. *My head (saith he) is wet with the drops of Dew of the Night*: Because Christianity was drawing its Ceremonies long; they began then; at that very time, they began then to draw out the shadows

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dows of the Evening: A great many Ceremonies came into Christianity, and a Form and Way of Prayer suitable and agreeable to it, and such ways of Preaching as prepar'd for it. And then they came to be more intent upon the Remembrance of such a Saint, and such a Martyr, and keeping their Days; and drawing as many outward Forms and Ceremonies of Religion as they could, and they neglected the Power of it. And this Christ observes, and calls it, *the Drops of Dew, the Drops of the Night upon his Head:* And then the Church of Christ began to *slumber*.

And this is the first Time that is to be taken notice of in regard of the *slumbering*, even of the *wise Virgins*; Of which I shall speak presently more particularly to you.

The Second is this; And I desire that none would be offended, or think me censorious in speaking of it: For I design nothing, (I can truly Appeal to God) but only to speak the Truth, and the Reality of Things, in a Point, where Scripture calls for the speaking of it. That is, This *Slumber* hath been since the *Reformation*; As soon as ever the first Power had shewn itself; There was indeed, a mighty Spirit of Truth, and Spirit of Holiness in the first *Reformation*; Men and Women were then Christians of a high Rate, of a high Degree, of a high Excellency: How willing were they to suffer in the days of *Queen Mary*, in our own Nation? How did they love one another? How did the Power and Glory of Christianity appear in them? But, I hope, it will be no scandal to say this, That it hath been in a decay for a Hundred Years: For it is the very express words of one, that is, *Dr. Burnet*, that we know by the Name of the Bishop of *Salisbury*; he spake it plainly and openly in this City, *That the Reformation has been losing ground for these Hundred Years.* And whence is this? *Sermon, of not falling out by the* But only a great *slumber* hath fallen upon the Profession of the *Protestant Religion* for a Hundred Years: And the Glory and *Way.* Power and Excellency of Christianity, we have not yet restored to its own Beauty, and to its own Glory.

And this, I have endeavoured several times, (both in Discourse and in Writing) to make plain, That the Church of *Sardis* is the Representation of the Generality of the Christian Churches, under the *Reformation*. And, I desire, that you would but read, and weigh the Description that is given of that

that Church; Rev. 3. 1, 2. And to the Angel of the Church in Sardis, write, These things saith he that hath the Seven Spirits of God, and the Seven Stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a Name that thou livest, and art dead. Be watchful (saith he) and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die. Be watchful: What's the meaning of that? But only to shew, that the State of the Protestant Churches had fallen into a great slumber, a great drowsiness: And therefore it is, that we know so little of the Power of Christianity at this day. And saith he, I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received, and heard, and hold fast and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch (observe that) I will come on thee as a Thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee; if thou dost not watch.

Here we plainly see what is opposed to *slumbering*, it is *watching*. And when Christ saith, *Watch*, so often, and so much; it signifies, that his Church would fall into a *slumbering* condition; it had a Name to live, it was not perfectly dead: But it was not vigorous, and powerful in the ways of Christianity, And therefore *watch*, and *strengthen the things that remain, which are ready to die*.

I'll give you only two Arguments, why I am of this Judgment, That this very Parable I am upon, does look directly upon the state of the Protestant Churches; and so upon our selves, as in the Profession of the Protestant Religion, at this very Time; I'll give you the two Arguments, and then I'll go on in a more practical way of discoursing the particulars, of this *slumbering* of Christians in the Profession of Christianity.

The First Argument I give you is,

Because it is now the Time, It is now the Time especially, when our Lord delays his coming. For there shall not be Time, Times, nor so much, as half Time any more whole and entire; For at the Reformation Christ began to make an appearance of his Kingdom, and of his Coming; And it is certain, the bringing in of the Reformation, as all true Protestants own, it was one of the greatest Works of Providence that ever hath been known in the World, and especially since the days of Christ. It was strange and wonderful, in the Times when God did it; that he should bring in a Reformation against
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such high Pretences, as that of *The Catholick Church*, as *Rome* was called; and against the *Papacy* and *Hierarchy*, that took upon themselves to be the great Patrons of, and Pretenders to Christian Religion, and the true Votaries and Servants of it, to have all things good within themselves. Now, That such a poor inconsiderable Person as *Luther* was, should make opposition to such a Body; when as the *Kings* and *Princes* of *Europe* were utter Enemies to the *Reformation*: It was a Mighty Power of God. And, as I have often shew'd; *Rev. 10.* is the very Representation of the *Reformation*; *Christ* came down from *Heaven*, clothed with a *Cloud*, and with a *Rainbow* upon his head. And he set his right Foot upon the *Sea*, and his left Foot upon the *Earth*, and cryed with a loud Voice, as when a *Lion* roareth, and swore by him that liveth for ever and ever, That *Time*, and *Times*; and even of half *Time*, that it should be no longer. Who would not (I say.) but have expected, that *Christ* should immediately have come, and changed the *World*, and brought in his *Kingdom*.

But our Lord delays his Coming only, till the *Hundred* and *Eighty* Years are made up; of which, there wants only now but *Five* Years. And, at the present, there is a great delay; though I make no doubt, It will not be long. But yet Men think, *Christ* hath delayed his Coming; and where is the Promise of it? and that he hath quite forgot it. In this Time therefore, of the Lord's delaying his Coming, there is such a great slumber upon the *Christian Church*.

In the second Place, I have this great Reason, that moves me much to think, that the present delay, that the Parable speaks of, under that *spiritual Slumber* of the Churches of *Christ*, hath run along with the Time since the *Reformation*; Because *Christ* saith, in the first Words, *Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto Ten Virgins*: When? Why it shall be at that Time, as in the 24th of *Matthew*; though we divide Chapters, yet the sense is not divided, nor our Saviour's Sermon divided; but our Lord is still going on in his Discourse, *Mat. 24. 48, 49, &c.* But and if that evil Servant shall say in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken: The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of; and shall cut him in sunder, and appoint him his portion with the Hypocrites: There shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth.

B b

There

There was never a greater Hypocrisie in the World than the Pa-
 pacy: To which they say (you know, in Reverence) *Your Holine-
 ness*; as we say to Princes, *Your Majesty*, or *Your Highness*. And they
 say, *Your Holiness*, a Blasphemous Assumption; and therefore he
 shall appoint him his portion with the Hypocrites; Because he hath been
 the *Evil Servant*, that hath said, *My Lord delayeth his coming*.
 And so he begins to Eat and Drink with the Drunken, and to Smite
 the Men-servants, and Maid-servants: That is, to Persecute the
 true Servants of Jesus Christ, and of the Gospel.

Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto Ten Virgins,
 which took their Lamps, &c. when that Judgment is.

So that the Time before the punishing of this *Bad Servant*,
 and the cutting him off, and Devoting him to the Wrath and In-
 dignation of God; Before this, there falls such a *Slumber* as
 this.

Now therefore, Having made the way, I shall Endeavour to go
 on, and to speak to these two things.

First, To shew wherein (as to our particular) we are to observe
 a Spirit of *Slumber*; and that the power of Christianity does
 take small hold of us. And then,

In the *Second* place; I shall Endeavour to shew you, wherein the
Wise and Foolish Virgins Differ; though they are both in a *Slumber*;
 and they Die alike, they Sleep alike, yet there is a very vast and
 great difference betwixt them.

In the *First* place, This is a very great Argument that we are un-
 der the *Slumber* of Christianity; That we are not really in a Holy
 Transport, in all the Services, and Enjoyments, and Ordinances of
 Christianity. Indeed, we make a shift to pass through the Form,
 to hold up the Form of Prayer, and of Preaching, and of the Lord's
 Supper, and of good Discourse sometimes one with another: But
 we have not that mighty Affection, we are just like Persons in a
Slumber: You know, they understand something of what you say
 to them; and they make some kind of Answer: But they are so
 low and so imperfect herein; that we may be sure, they are not in
 the Vigour of their Senses, and of their Understanding, and of
 their Reasoning, and of their Discourse.

Surely, If we were raised to the Power of Christianity, we
 should have more of those High Elevations of mind, that the Apo-
 stle speaks of; and that the Holy Men of Old, in former times,
 speak of. We should have such flaming Desires after God, and af-
 ter

ter Christ, that our hearts would be Ravished, and we should be drawn (as it were) out of our selves, in these things; Whereas we do but Nod (as I may so express it) in our way of Christianity; Or, when we seem to do something, we are presently in a kind of *Slumber*, so that there wants the Power and Life of it. When David saith, *How sweet is thy Word to my taste? Sweeter than the Honey, or the Honey Comb*; It was another State than we are in; All the 119 Psalm is a perpetual Rapture and Extasie of Heart; All that time he was awake: So, *Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? And there is none upon Earth that I desire beside Thee?*

And, *My Heart and my Flesh Faileth; but thou art the strength of my Heart and my Portion for ever. My Soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy Judgments at all times.*

All our Converſe with Christ, and with the Holy Ordinances of Christ, and all our Drawings nigh to God, They would be with a Holy Transport. So in the 42. Psalm, saith David; *As the Hart pants after the water-Brook, so pants my Soul after thee O God.*

You cannot really suppose, but that if we were fully posselt with Religion, indeed, we should be carried out of our selves, in Love, and Service, and Thankfulness, and Obedience, and all the Powers of Holiness and Religion; Whereas now, If a Person be but Civil to Religion, If he will but sit patiently, and hear a Discourse of it; Or if he can but endure to be called off from the World, to God; we look upon it as a great Attainment. But I say, If Christianity were not under *Slumber*, in the Spirits of Men, we should be in a high Transport; That, as the Apostle speaks in the 2 Cor, 5. *The love of Christ Constrains us, because we thus judge.* The Word (as the Learned Observe) signifies such a kind of Transport, as when *Elijah* was taken up by the Spirit, and carried hither and thither; So the love of Christ constrains us, that is, Transports us every way, Ver. 14. *Wherefore (saith he) henceforth know we no man after the Flesh (Ver. 16.) Yea, though we have known Christ after the Flesh, yet now henceforth know we him so no more.*

Surely, This is the *Slumber* of Christianity, that we are taken so much with outward appearances, with out-sides of men. The Apostle observed the *Slumber* of Christianity, upon this account in his Day; James 2. 2. *If there come into your Assembly a man with a Gold Ring, in goodly Apparel, &c.* Here Christianity began to be in a *Slumber*; not but that due regard ought to be to the fe-

veral Ranks of Men: But in this regard, we know Men too much after the flesh, so that it argues Christianity much in a Slumber. Do but read, I beseech you; (don't think I speak, either vainly, or without due consideration of what I say) Do but read those places of Scripture, that are so Eminent in setting out the Glory of Christianity: While we look not (saith the Apostle in 2 Cor. 4. 18) at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen, are eternal.

Now I say, who is it, that loves thus to look upon the things that are seen as nothing, and the things that are not seen as all? So (saith he) We know that if our earthly house of this Tabernacle were dissolved. (chap. 5. 1.) we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens. ver. 2. For in this we groan earnestly, saith the Apostle.

Who groans earnestly? I do not speak at all to be censorious, or to tax Men beyond Reason, or any way to justify my self; but only this I am clearly sensible of, That the General Character of the Church of Sardis is fallen upon all the Protestant Churches, and upon all Protestant Persons: As David saith in another case, There is no one that doth not Slumber, (I may say) no not one. Though there are some Christians more lively, and more wakeful, and more apprehensive than others; yet there are none but Slumber; for the General Character of any Church, it falls upon particular persons, in a very great measure.

Now I say, those high Ecstasies of spirituality, of Heavenliness, of Holiness, of Purity, that are to be found in Scripture, make it plain, that the excellent and glorious, and powerful Spirit of Christianity is in a Slumber, as in us.

And hereby, I would desire you to take notice, That the Discourse of the Kingdom of Christ is not, as if some sensual or Worldly Glory were to be brought in; or that men were to be pleased with that: For the thing that I expect, when the Kingdoms of this World shall be proclaimed to be the Kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ, are quite of another nature: That whoever of us are alive at that day, whether I or you, or any of us that truly love and fear him, and love the Glory of his Kingdom; I make no doubt, but the Glory and Power of Christianity shall sprout out afresh upon them, as the Psalmist saith, Then the Lord awaked, as one out of sleep, and like a mighty Man that shouteth by reason of Wine

Wine (Psalm 78. 65, 66.) And he gave his vineyards to the blind-
parks; he put them to a perpetual reproach. So we shall be able
to smite the Lusts and Corruptions, and the power of Temptati-
ons that now so prevail upon us; we shall be able to chase them,
and to put them to flight, and to drive them before us. We shall
be able to love God and Christ, and to be mortified to this
World; we shall be able to express our selves abundantly in the
ways of holiness, and to rejoice in God accordingly; and it is
no other Kingdom that I expect. But all shall bring in this, with
its happy consequences; I say, we shall be able to lay off, and
aside from our selves, all the Vanity, Pride, and Love of this
World, and all, not only the Gross Sins that are in the World,
in regard of which, men are scandalous, and Christians evil spo-
ken of every where, But those Sins that the World doth colour
and varnish over, and speak very kindly and fairly of; all the
deadness in Hearing, in Praying and Discoursing. Alas! our
Discourse of Religion, it is but a kind of Formality; we don't
retain any thing of it. But when this Slumber is taken off of
Christianity, it shall be much otherwise.

In the second Place, When the Slumber of Christianity is taken
off, we shall see much clearer Scripture-Truths, and in the Sal-
vation and Redemption of Christ: All the Dispute and Anger
about these things will go off, for the clearness of things will
be seen. And then, that Dispute that is upon us now, concerning
the Kingdom of Christ; Some are utter Enemies to such Discourses
of it, even good persons; and some are ready to scorn, and laugh
it out of Countenance; and few there are that believe it, and are
in the Truth of it; What is the Reason of this? but because
these Scriptures are not so cleared. And so, very many excellent
and Eminent Servants of God, they are afraid to Discourse of the
Free Grace of God, and the Righteousness of Christ without
Works, lest it should make men loose, and make men licentious;
and therefore they are streightning and curbing, and glancing all
they can, against such Discourses as these are. The reason is, be-
cause the Spirit of Slumber is so much upon Christians, Isaiah 29.
The Lord hath poured upon you the spirit of deep sleep, and hath clo-
sed your eyes; the Prophets, and your Rulers, the Seers hath he co-
vered. And the Vision of all is become unto you as the words of
a Book that is sealed, which Men deliver to one that is learned, say-
ing, read this; I pray thee, and he saith, I cannot, for it is sealed.

And

And the Book is delivered to one that is not learned, saying, read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I am not learned. Now, the Spirit of deep sleep, I hope, is taken off from us by the Reformation, and by the clearness of the Gospel, in that manner that we enjoy it, in the main, now in the Protestant Profession; but there is a Slumber still remaining: Or else Men would hear and learn with far greater ease, and in another manner Discourse with one another: It will be wonderful when the Tongue of the dumb shall sing, as it is said in the Prophet. I am verily persuaded, That those that say least in Religion now, there will be such a change in them, by taking off the Spirit of Slumber, That the Tongue of the dumb shall sing: He that knows not how to speak, and is afraid to speak of Religion, because he thinks he has not knowledge enough, his Tongue shall sing in Discourses of the ways of God; That is, he shall speak with great clearness, and great acceptableness.

In the Third Place; We shall have a greater value for the state of Glory that is to be revealed, and a greater undervaluing of the present state of this World: We shall not think we are undone, if we have not of this World, and of the things of it, in such an abundance, as we would have.

Or, if we cannot lay such foundations of Estates for the time to come; Men will begin to say, That this present World is like a Cottage that is suddenly to be removed. And if Men had foreknown, in Jamaica, some Days or Weeks before, that their Houses should go down (as one may say) so quick into the Earth, and be swallowed up, and even the Earth it self so changed, what value do you think they would have had for those Houses, or Grounds? and how many Years Purchase would they have valu'd all at as we ordinarily speak? So I say, when our present state is like a Cottage that is to be removed; that great value and esteem we have of the World shall go off.

If you will say, This is only a sort of Levelling Doctrine or Discourse; I do not intend it should move any one as for the present; but only to an expectation; and to take off our hearts from the present evil World: And I only desire to tell you, what shall be when you shall see such a Glory and Light of this World to come, appearing and shining out: I do but desire that you would remember what hath been spoken to you out of the Word, and in the Name of Jesus Christ, what

what hath been spoken of these things that are to come to pass. I'll give you but a brief Account of the Difference between the one and the other, (the *Wise*, and *Foolish Virgins*) and so conclude in the Application of it. And I take it out of that 5th. Chapter of *Solomon's Song*. Here's the great Difference that is between the one sort, and the other sort. *Ver. 2. I Sleep (saith she) but my heart waketh.* That is, there is a Principle within me; there is a Spirit within me: A Spirit within every *Wise Virgin*, that keeps a watch even while it is in a *Slumber*. As you know, many Persons, they have a wariness of things, though they are in a sort of *Slumber*; yet they are presently sensible if any thing comes, either as to advantage, or disadvantage.

So there is a Spirit in every true Christian, that is aware of the Great Concernments of Eternity, that knows the Excellency of Christ, and that loves Jesus Christ; and that knows the Vanity of this World, and the things of it: Even while they are in a *Slumber*, their heart wakes concerning these things. And then, again, you read, They cannot be quiet, they have such kind of *Items* and *Intimations* from Christ, that they are presently aware: That when Christ speaks, presently the *Beloved*, the Church of Christ, the true Church answers him: (*ver. 4.*) Saith she, *My Beloved put in his hand by the hole of the Door, and my bowels were moved for him:* Indeed, she could not get quickly up, *Indeed, saith she, I have put off my Coat, how shall I put it on?* That is, I have set my self in a way of Religion, that I hope, will do, and will be enough, and it is as much as others do; and as much as generally is to be found among Christians, and as much as can suit with the present state of this World; but Christ gave her an *Intimation* and *Item* from himself; And presently, saith she, *My Bowels were moved for him; And I arose to open to my Beloved;* and then she went seeking up and down the City: And the *Watchmen* said, it is too much for you to take upon you; they take away her *Vail* from her; they impeach her Modesty as it were: But she goes on, *I Charge you, O Daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my Beloved, that ye tell him I am sick of love:* There is an earnest, and vehement, and inward affection in the heart, that is in every true, sincere Christian, in every *wise Virgin*; *Though they sleep, yet their heart waketh:* There is a Principle and a Power, that shall never be deserted and forsaken of God, even in the midst of this inclination to *Slumber*: God will
bring

bring it forth in Power, and to Perfection; and so you may Trace the thing along in your own souls: Do you find that a little *Intimation* makes you very earnest and vehement after Christ? Do you find that there is such a stable desire of Christ; and his Grace and Spirit, That you desire he should know, that you are *sick of love*? And that you declare to the World, that you love him above all things else.

And so, I shall proceed no further in this Discourse, but only close with Application.

1. In the first place, It teaches us, That we should not magnifie the present state of any Church, or Churches whatsoever, or their way; for all of them come far short, though one much shorter than another, yet all come short.

And so we should see in our own state: Alas! it is but suitable to the Day, or rather (as I may say) to the Night that is yet continuing, and is not yet past off from us. Though indeed, God is exceedingly to be magnified and adored, in all the good of the Gospel and Christianity that we see in the World. I am far from putting a Blemish or Diminution upon what God hath done; seeing there are so many Excellent Preachers of Christianity, and so many Excellent Christians; and such a great Light of the Gospel, as we have: That such as were heretofore, would have wondred at the Goodness and Grace of God, if there should have been such a freedom of Preaching his Word every where, and gathering Souls to himself: And that there are so many of his Servants have a desire towards his Name, and towards the Remembrance of him: And therefore, I say, I desire to fore-caution as to that part; That I am not at all censorious, but acknowledging of the Infinite Grace of God. But yet I say still, That I would not have you think, we are at the Excellency of Christianity, as it is in Publick, or as it is in Particulars; I make no doubt, but he that fears God now, shall fear him much more; and he that loves Christ now, shall love him much more; and they that speak and think of his Name, shall do it much more, when *this Slumber* is taken off: I tell you, you cannot do now what you would do; you cannot love God and Christ; you cannot be so free, and undistracted, and retired in to the way of Christianity, as you would be. And therefore look upon it, That the present Day is the Day of the *Slumber* of the Glory of Christianity; and therefore, let us bewail our selves,

selves, that we can get up no higher awakened: much more, that we cannot shake off that *Slumber* that is so much upon us.

But still I say, we must expect a clearer, and lightfomer, and a brighter Air of the Gospel, and Sun-shine of it: We must expect *the Sun of Righteousness with healing in his Wings.*

Do but consider how you come on upon a Duty, and how you come off; and how you lose what you would retain; and how hard it is to gain, and how quickly it is gone off.

Our souls should be in a constant posture in this World; our Vessels for ordinary uses, should be *Holiness to Jehovah*; but if one Treats of this way; or that way, one finds, that the Glory of it does not sparkle and glister as it should, I speak not what I speak from my own spirit, but what God will speedily make good to all those that shall live in that Time, Then they shall say, *How hath the Glory of Christianity changed me!* We shall find the Vacancies and the Emptinesses and Blemishes that are upon us, shall be fill'd up, and taken off; and we shall walk in a higher Power and Spirit of Christianity: And therefore let no one boast, in regard of this or that Church-State, whatsoever it be; For certainly, All is under a *Spirit of Slumber* now; and there shall come a far more excellent State upon the Churches of Christ; and so it shall descend upon every particular Person. And then,

2. In the Second Place, Let us earnestly aspire to this state in our selves; as David says, *I will not give Sleep to my eyes, nor Slumber to my Eye-lids, till I make an Habitation for the God of Jacob.* So let us aspire now, as high as we can; and let us earnestly desire this Glory of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, that shall awaken us as a Man is awakened out of Sleep, as the expression is in the Prophet.

For, I am perswaded, God will awaken all his Servants, as one is awakened out of Sleep; And therefore, let us earnestly long for that Time, And whatever God is doing, or seems to do in the World, let us observe what *Tendencies* it has to this Excellent State of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ; and then this *Slumber* shall be perfectly taken off. And then,

3. In the Third and last place, Let it comfort us, exceedingly in God, and in Christ. And let us say, The Things that God hath prepared and designed, they are Things That Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man

to consider. For that in the 64th of Isaiah, is to be applied to the Coming of Christ. O that thou wouldest Rent the Heavens, and that thou wouldest come down; and that the Mountains might flow down at thy Presence. As when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the Waters to boil, &c. And then (saith he) Things that Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, yet he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him. Since the beginning of the World, Men have not heard, nor perceived by the Ear, neither hath the Eye seen, O God, besides thee, what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.

Consider it at your own Freedom; This State is near coming forth; such an one, as hath not been seen, or heard of since the Foundation of the World: In which, we shall no longer complain, at the rate we do now; That all our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags, and That our Iniquities like the Wind, take us away: And That we do not stir up our selves to take hold of God: But then there shall be a General Stirring up of one another, to take hold of the Lord our God.

SERMON VII

On Matthew 25. v. 1.

Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto Ten Virgins, which took their Lamps, and went forth to meet the Bridegroom, &c.

I have in several Discourses, endeavour'd to express to you the Divine Sense and Meaning of our Lord in this Parable, who (as I told you) Opened his Mouth in Parables; and in this Parable, in a very Eminent Manner; and hath made known things hid from the very Foundation of the World.

The Points that I have already Discour'd, it may be necessary to give you only just a Remembrance of; and to come to that, that is now to be propos'd: The first was this.

That the Kingdom of Christ, in all the motions, in all the parts, in all the Dates and Times of it, is the Kingdom of Heaven.

It is not to be look'd upon, as an Earthly or a Sensual Kingdom, but the Kingdom of Heaven.

In the second Place,

That True Christianity is an *Epousal unto Jesus Christ*: The Scripture hath delighted to set it forth under the Resemblance of Marriage and Epousals.

Thirdly, That all the Eye of a Christian is, not to the present state, (though it be necessary in the way) but it is to the future, and to the higher state.

For, as I opened to you out of the Old Testament, it was the Command of God; That there should be a Contract between the Person that had taken a *Beautiful Woman Captive*, and her that was taken *Captive*, if he desired to Marry her; There was to be a time of Contract; *Thirty Days* God did precisely appoint; That it might shadow to us, That the present state is but a state of our *Epousals and Contract*. And therefore, our chief Intention, the Great Eye of the Soul, must be to the Solemnity and the Glory of the Nuptials of the Marriage it self; *The Virgins took their Lamps* therefore, *and went forth to meet the Bridegroom*.

In the Fourth Place, I opened to you, the great Solemnity.

Fifthly, That notwithstanding the Death, and Resurrection, and Ascension of Christ into Glory; there is a great Delay of his coming.

And though this seems very strange and unreasonable it should be so; I endeavoured to open to you the Reason that Scripture hath given; why it is so.

In the Sixth Place, in the last Discourse, I opened to you this, What a Drowse, and Sleepy State of Christianity hath come upon Christians, and upon the Profession of Christ, by reason of the Bridegroom's Tarrying.

I shall now go on to speak of this; viz. At Midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, Go ye out, to meet him.

I have considered, and weighed the Parable in all the parts of it in all the Scope of it; and I cannot find that it can relate to any thing, but to the very Glory of the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. For, immediately, it comes to this; That the Door was shut; They that were ready, went in with him to the Wedding, and the Door was shut. Christ professeth to them without, when once the Door was shut; I know you not. And there is no such thing as that, before the great coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And therefore this Cry at Midnight, is no other, than that which the Apostle speaks, in the 1st of Thess. 4. 16. For the Lord himself shall

descend from Heaven with a shout, with the Voice of the Archangel, and with the Trump of God: and the Dead in Christ shall rise first. This is the great Cry that shall be made, it shall be the Cry at the Trump of the Archangel, the Voice of the Archangel. And so in the 1 Cor. 15. The Apostle speaks the very same thing, that it should come to this; There should be an immediate Raising of the Dead. Ver. 52. In a Moment, in the twinkling of an Eye, at the last Trump (for the Trumpet shall Sound) and the Dead shall be raised Incorruptible, and we shall be Changed. This therefore is the Midnight-Cry. Indeed, there may be some Resemblances of it, by sudden Judgments, and by sudden Affrightments upon the World. As we may easily Apprehend, of late, at Jamaica. It was to them like a Day of Judgment. I say, It must needs be like to such a Midnight-Cry, when an immediate Stroke of God came upon them; A Thundring, and Lightning, and an Opening of the Earth, and a Rising up (as it were) of the Sea, to sweep down the Inhabitants into it self, this looked just like the end of the World.

And though God gave us a little Item of such a thing, though it did not so come upon us, as that beyond the Sea; yet we may easily Consider, it might have been like a Midnight-Cry, if God had done with us as he did with them.

But yet still, this would not have been that Midnight-Cry, but even to those that are gone down into the Depth, in that place: Yet still there remains a Midnight-Cry that shall awaken them.

It was like a Midnight-Cry upon Sodom, when it was from Heaven Consumed by Fire: But yet, it is very evident, that Midnight-Cry remains still to come, upon that very Sodom and Gomorrah. And therefore I say, Though I allow Allusions to such a Scripture as this, when any Judgment that has been, or may be is set out to us, there may be an Allusion to it, even as the Scripture bears it out by its Authority to do so: but yet I say to you, That it is very certain, That the Midnight-Cry remains to those, that have been under such a Midnight-Cry.

Saith Christ, Mat. 10. 15. It shall be more Tolerable for the Land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of Judgment, than for that City. You see here, Sodom and Gomorrah are to be under the Cry of the Day of Judgment.

And so I say, Those under that Judgment lately in that Colony that part of this Nation, though beyond the Sea, there remains still

still, and they are bound under the same Station, and waiting for a *Midnight-Cry*; though they have had such a one already upon them. And, if such a Judgment should come upon this City, or this Nation, that would not excuse any that were swallowed up; but they must expect such a *Midnight-Cry* to come upon them.

And, this I desire you to take notice of, That it may open to you, and inform you of this *Midnight-Cry*. Whosoever therefore shall go down into the Grave before the Coming of Jesus Christ; you must lie down with this assurance, this certainty; That though you go never so quiet to the Grave, though you are conducted to those Lodgings and Apartments of Death, with never so much order, and with never so much silence; yet there must be a *Midnight-Cry* to awake you out of those Graves; every one of us must be awakened by the *Midnight-Cry*, and all that have gone before us, must awake, by this *Midnight-Cry*; *Arise every one, and go forth to meet the Bridegroom.*

Now this is the Point therefore, that I shall endeavour to open to you, concerning the Case and Condition that persons shall be in, when they are awakened thus of a sudden: For I told you, those *Slumbrings* express the *Drowse State* of Christianity that is even now; but this *sleeping* properly expresseth Death; And the *Midnight-Cry* that awakens out of that sleep, it is that *Trump of God*, and that *Shout and Voice of the Arch-Angel*: And that will be a Cry indeed, and so shrill, that no Grave can hide, or remove us from it; but it shall certainly sound in the Ears of the Dead, that they shall presently, at that very Summons, at that very Cry, they shall rise up immediately, and whether they will or no, They must go forth and meet the Bridegroom.

I shall therefore propose to Discourse this Point:

That in the very same circumstances (pray consider) that any of us lie down in the Grave, in the very same we must be awakened up again; We must be called out of the Grave, in the very same State.

Whoever has gone out of this present World, a Believer in Jesus Christ, a truly repenting person, a sanctified and justified person, as such, they shall rise at that Cry.

And they that have gone out in their sins, in their Lusts, in their Impurity, in their false profession of Christianity, in that very same condition they must rise again.

The *Virgins* that were *wise*, they rise *wise Virgins* at the *Midnight-Cry*.

And the *Virgins* that were *foolish*; they are not mended by all that time that they have spent; either their *Bodies* in the *Grave*, or their *Spirits* in what state soever, but they rise *foolish Virgins*. For so you see here, (ver. 8.) The *Virgins* all arose, and trimmed their *Lamps*, and the *foolish* said, the *foolish* were *foolish* still; and they said unto the *wise*, for the *wise* were *wise* still.

I shall therefore Endeavour to make this Point as plain to you, and as forceable as I can, by way of Practice and Engagement upon us, to look well about us, and to consider what our State and Condition is, because we shall rise the very same that we lie down.

And therefore I shall lay it out in these Heads of Discourse:

First, I shall open to you, That those that rise at that *Midnight-Cry*, They shall certainly presently know, what their State and Condition is; and yet notwithstanding that (which is the great wonder of the thing) they shall so act, and they shall so endeavour to demean themselves, in mending their circumstances, wherein they lay down, as this Parable represents, and yet shall not be able to do it. This indeed, may seem very wonderful, as I shall endeavour to open to you. And then,

In the Second place, I shall shew you how every person shall rise in such a kind of circumstance, like one that hears the *Midnight-Cry*.

But more particularly, I shall open this in a *Foolish Virgin* state; that is, in a State wherein we seem to be truly Christians, we hope so of our selves, and others hope so of us, and yet we are not so.

And, I shall open to you, what a kind of struggle there will be, notwithstanding such *foolish Virgins* must needs know their State in the main; yet the thing will be administered by God in such a marvellous manner, That they shall endeavour to mend and to change the disadvantage of their present Circumstances. And then, I shall conclude with Application.

First, Therefore, I shall begin with this; That Every person, at that *Midnight-Cry*, must needs presently know his own State, his own condition, with relation to Happiness or Misery; And This I shall open to you, in these three Evidences or Arguments, That every person must needs at that *Midnight-Cry*, immediate-

ly know and discover what their State and Condition is
 1. The first Argument or Evidence of it is this; Because the Spirit of a Man comes to the rising of the Body, with the Notices, and with the Impressions of what State it hath been in, from the time of Death, to the time of that Resurrection.

The Spirit of a Man, I say, that hath gone out of the Body, it comes full of the sence of that state and condition, wherein it hath been in all that time: For, there is not such a kind of oblivion, or forgetfulness, or slumber upon the Spirit, by being reunited to the Body, that it does not know, nor understand the case, or the condition, that it hath been in all that time.

Dives indeed, in Hell, knew his own State and Condition; but it may be supposed, That when a Spirit hath been out of the Body, when it comes into the Body again, it only knows what it was in the Body, when it left the Body, and not what the State and Condition hath been all along since it left the Body. But we should consider, when the Scripture speaks these things, we have great reason to believe, as I shall shew you, these Representations seem so disposed, that we may understand, men shall endeavour to change their circumstances then, yet for all that, they come under apprehensions of that state and condition they have been in all along.

And therefore (John 5. 28.) our Saviour seems to speak, that they do (as it were) come right forward into the state of Condemnation that have done evil.

Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the Graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. They come immediately forth, each to their own state; that state wherein they have been since Death, and at Death: So Dan. 12. 1, 2. There shall be a time of great trouble. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the Earth, shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. For the Spirits that have been with God and Christ, they come with the blessed assurances of that state and condition: And they that have been in Chains of Darknels to the Judgment of the Great Day, under the knowledge of that, they come under the Judgment of eternal fire; as the expression is, in the Apostles Peter and Jude.

Every one, They come (as it were) breathing, and carrying upon

upon them; the favour, the odour of that state and condition wherein they have been.

The Spirit of a Man knows its own state, even when it returns into the Body: And there is this great Scripture that doth assure us, if you should think; that what I have already given, doth not rise up to the very Point, *Rom. 2. 15.* You shall see in what manner all come forth at that day, *They shew the work of the Law written in their hearts, their Conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts, the mean while, accusing, or else excusing one another: in the day (observe that) in the day when God shall judge the secrets of Men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel:* Here's the manner in which they come forth in that day; they come with *Thoughts* either *accusing* or *excusing*: And then (saith the Apostle) is the time when there is that vigorous Accusation or Excusation of Conscience; it is in the day when God shall judge the secrets of Men by Jesus Christ, according to my Gospel: So that Men rise, even in that Midnight-Cry, when they come into Bodies, with *Thoughts* full, either of *Accusation* or *Excusation*; They come with all their *Thoughts* about them, they do not leave their *Thoughts* either in Heaven or in Hell; but they come with *Thoughts* either *accusing* or *excusing*. That's the first Argument.

2. The second Argument is this, They know in what Company they come, and whether they are in the Glorious and Blessed Company or not; For it is very evident, the Saints come together with Christ; and therefore they are assured, because they know the Company they come along with: So in *1 Thes. 4.* saith the Apostle, *The dead in Christ, God will bring them with him:* So they come with Christ; they know that they come in his company, and they are assured.

There is a great deal of difference (you know) between those that come along with the Judge, and make a part of his Honourable Retinue, and Attendance, and those that come out of Prison, and behold the Face of the Judge, as sitting in Judgment upon them, *1 Thes. 4. 14, 15.* *For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, Them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him, For we say unto you by the Word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the Coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep: They shall certainly come with Jesus Christ; And so, Zach. 14. 5. The Lord my God shall come; and all the Saints with thee.*

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They come in the Glory of the Company of Jesus Christ. And this our Saviour calls, a *Being set at the Right Hand*. It is the very same thing with that, *Mat. the 25. He shall set the Goats on the Left Hand, and the Sheep on the Right*; That is, they come with him on his *Right Hand*. And in that Scripture, *Rev. 19. It is said, The Heavens opened unto Jesus Christ; and the Armies which were in Heaven, they follow him on White horses. Ver. 11. And I saw Heaven opened, and beheld a White-horse, and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True: His Eyes were as a flame of Fire. Ver. 12. And it is said, The Armies which were in Heaven followed him upon White-Horses: Ver. 14. That is, The Saints in Bodies of Glory; For the White Horses, and the Fine Linnen White and Clean, that are there named, mean the Glory of the Saints, in Bodies of the Resurrection. On the other side, the Wicked, they come Aloof; they come no nearer, nor no faster than they must needs; they are forced and called for, as Prisoners in Chains and Fetters must come, that are brought: And so they must come in this way, Sinners and Wicked Persons, that have not Repented nor Believed in Jesus Christ; that have not the *White Horses to Ride upon*, and the *Fine Linnen White and Clean* to be Arrayed in. And it brings in,*

The *Third* thing. For, the very Bodies, the very Cloaths, that the one and the other will have on, do enough assure them, exactly what they are, whether the Saved, or the Miserable; whether the Happy or the Unhappy: I say, The garments wherewith they are Cloathed. For, while Saints have *Linnen White and Clean*; the Wicked, they are Dark and Duskie, they are in Prison-Cloaths, and Prison-Raggs, they have Fetters about them: They know by that, as well as Men know by their Garb, what the State and Condition of one another is. Now this I look upon, to give the Reason to that Expression, *Rev. 16. Just when Christ is coming, he said, Just at the very time when he is coming (Ver. 15.) Behold, I come as a Thief; Blessed is he that Watcheth, and keepeth his Garments lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.*

Blessed is he that watcheth, &c. That is, *Blessed* is he that looks well to it, that when he rises again, he may have a Robe of Immortality; That he may have a Garment suitable to that State, Suitable to the Glory and Excellency of that Time.

Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his Garments; hath so taken care, to lay off the Cloathing of the Body; that when he comes into it again, it may instead of all the Darkness and Corruption; In which it lay down, it may be a Body of Glory; a Body Incorruptible, as it is said, in the 1 Cor. 15. 52. The Dead shall be raised Incorruptible. They shall be Raised, He speaks evidently of the Saints of Christ, They shall be raised in a moment Incorruptible.

And that's the first thing that I have laid down and endeavoured to Argue to you; The time of Christs coming, That will be the time, when that *Midnight-Cry* shall be, and that when we shall be in the first hearing of it, and come forth, we shall know in what state and condition we are.

First, By the Notices given to us from our Spirits, from our *Thoughts* Accusing, or Excusing at that very time, in that very day. And then,

Again, from the Company we are in; whether we come with Christ, or whether we are those that are brought before him, whether we will or no. And then,

Thirdly, By that Habit of Body, wherein we shall be; either a *Body of Glory*, or a *Body of Shame and Contempt*.

And yet, notwithstanding This, which is the wonder of the Thing: and I confess, after my utmost thoughts and enquiry into it, I cannot satisfy my self how it should be: That notwithstanding this, Men are just in the same Circumstances wherein they lay down, and as if the Day of Judgment had taken them then, in the State and Condition that they had been in in the World, that which was their Prevalent, and their Superior, and their Final State, that which truly gave them their Denomination.

Now, I shall only give you this Account of it; though indeed I do not know how: It is a Wonder of the mighty Wisdom and the mighty power of God, that a man should so rise; That these *Foolish Virgins* must have notice, that they are *Foolish Virgins*, by what I now Argue to you; and that yet they should Endeavour to make the best of their Condition,

And I would do it in a word or two, because I would discourse the Point of the *Foolish Virgins*, especially to you at this time, and according to this Parable. Suppose a Man be a common Swearer, a common Drunkard, a common Impure, Luxu-
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rious Person; a Person that lives in Debauchery: This Man, suppose such an one die without having repented, and having returned to God, or the change of his course: This Person shall rise, he shall rise in all the horror of such a state when Judgment comes upon him: However, Men will not be perswaded of it now, or be brought to abhor or change such an insolent way of life, as they live in, nor will consider it now; yet they shall be raised in circumstances suitable to that very state in which they died.

As now, suppose a Man should be taken in an Earthquake, or by such a Judgment as they in *Jamaica*, or any other place; and that he was sensible of it a little before, what a danger he was in, and that it should come upon him while he was in his Cups, and Roar of Prophaneness; when he was scoffing and laughing at Religion; What do you think such a Person would do, if he had but a little notice of it before? I'll give you a plain Representation what a Case such a Person would be in, by the very same Case, by a precedent (as I may properly call it) that hath been before. If you look therefore into *Dan. 5.* you shall find the very same Case, *Belshazzar* (ver. 1.) made a great Feast to a Thousand of his Lords: And they brought the Golden and Silver Vessels, and they drank Wine, and Praised the Gods of Gold and of Silver, &c. In the same hour came forth *Fingers* of a Mans Hand, and wrote over against the Candlestick, upon the Plaister of the Wall of the Kings Palace, and the King saw part of the Hand that wrote. Then the Kings Countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the Joints of his Loins were loosed, and his Knees smote one against the other. This is the very case of such Persons.

I may boldly pronounce it in the Name of Christ, and in the Word of the Gospel, and of Truth; Look upon your Swaggers, and those that make nothing to scorn Religion; That make a Scoff at Sin; That never open their Mouths, but with an Oath, or in a Blasphemy; That these very Persons, supposing they die in this State, and with these Sins unrepented of, They shall rise in the very same, and with the horror of Judgment on them. They shall see (as it were) the *Fingers* upon the Wall; and their *Joints* shall be loosed, and their *Knees* smite one against another: They'll say to the Rocks, Fall on us, and to the Mountains, hide and cover us: Distress and Anguish shall come upon them, as it is said, *Prov. 1.* It shall come like a Whirlwind: Then

shall they call upon me, and I will not answer. Men that scorn and scoff at Religion now, they shall be forced then to cry, but they shall not find God; But then *I'll laugh* (saith God) *at their calamity, and mock when their fear cometh.*

In the second Place, Take a covetous Worldling, that does not so much as think there is any thing more, but to look well to this World, and he guilds his Covetousness over with so much Religion as is necessary for his present Concernment, to secure him from any thing of danger: I say, he keeps all his Worldliness within compass, with something of Religion; but he does not really consider what a great state, a state of Eternity is, and what a little, the present state of the World is.

Now, would you know in what a Case such a Man shall rise in? He shall rise in an amaze, and say, I never thought of the World to come, I thought of the present World; I knew how ill it would be with my Family, if I did not take care of that; but never thought of the other World; I had so much Silver and Gold, and Fruits of the Earth laid up for many years, and said, *Take thine ease, my Soul, Eat, Drink and be Merry*; and he never considered the greatness of this Eternal Condition.

Now, Observe what Christ speaks *Luke 12. 19.* when he said, *Soul, Take thine Ease, Eat, Drink and be Merry, for thou hast much Goods laid up for many years: Then God said to him, Thou Fool! This Night shall thy Soul be required of thee: And then, whose shall these things be which thou hast provided?* So is he that layeth up Treasure, and is not rich towards God.

I never thought (saith this Sensualist) of such a thing as that, this was a strange Notion in my life-time; a Notion, that I did not know how to understand, or to think it any thing but Fancy, and meer Discourse; but now I find what it is, not to be rich towards God.

And so I say, By these two Persons, I have briefly set out to you, what the Circumstances shall be in which Men shall rise that have not minded God and their Eternal Condition.

But, according to the Subject that is before me, I shall open to you, especially, the *Foolish Virgins*; that we may all take care; for it is indeed, a very nice Case; I say, a very nice Case; That a Man should be a *Virgin*; that any Person should be a *Virgin* in the account of Jesus Christ; and yet, because he is a *foolish Virgin* he is utterly undone: That is a *Virgin*, that hath the Truth
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of Religion, that hath the Truth of Doctrine, the Truth of Worship, and he must needs be supposed to be a Person of a sober outward Conversation; or else, he could not deserve the Name or Appearance, or Stile of a *Virgin*; He must not be a Swearer, Drunkard or Unclean Person; He must not be one that wallows, or tumbles in evil; for who would call such an one (with relation to God and Religion) a *Virgin*? And yet, notwithstanding this, because he is a *foolish Virgin*, all the Misery here exprest, comes upon him.

Let us therefore consider our selves; I would hope, That we might have a very good Title and Pretension to this Stile of a *Virgin*; and that we hold the Truth of the Gospel, and the Purity of Worship, and the Holiness of Conversation, in regard of all outward Appearance; and yet, let us look well to this, That we are not *Fools* therein: And therefore, I'll set out to you, in several particulars, according to the Wisdom of our Lord Jesus, in this Parable: I'll shew you the danger of being a *foolish Virgin*, and in what kind of Circumstances they shall rise, and how it shall be with them (as it were) from first to last; as our Lord hath here given to us, and yet I'll do it with brevity; for the things will be very plain: And if we would be but faithful to our selves, intaking notice of them, and laying them up in our hearts, and examining our hearts according to them; There needs not much to be said, but thought and considered, and meditated upon much by every one of us, in relation to each particular.

The First thing which expresses the circumstances in which *foolish Virgins* shall arise, is this,

They will presently begin to make the best of that Name of Profession, and that Name *Virginity* that hath been upon them: They'll be ready to say, I have had a Lamp; I carry that to be sure with me, I have had a Name of Profession and Christianity upon me: I have Endeavoured to Hear and to Pray, and to Receive the Lords Supper, and to keep the Lord's Day: I'll be certain to take that along with me; for all the *Virgins* arose, and Trimmed their Lamps. The *wise* indeed had Right to do it, and they did it upon good grounds, and the *foolish* did the very same thing, and therefore it is significantly exprest in the Text; All those *Virgins*, not only *wise* but *foolish*, They arose and Trimmed their Lamps: That is, they set out their Profession

as large, and as favourable, and with as much advantage as they could.

Now therefore, Here is our great Point, to look to this, That we have not only the Lamp of Profession; but that we have the Truth and Sincerity of Faith and Repentance, of Holiness, of an Interest in Christ, and in his Blood: I'll give you two Scriptures to this case, one on the side of the wise Virgins, and one on the side of the foolish Virgins, and so pass on. And I would desire you would take notice of these Scriptures, that may be helpful to bring these things to your Minds; That all of us may enter into deep Reflection, and serious Examination upon it. In the 1 Pet. 1. 22. saith the Apostle (speaking of these things) *seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the Truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the Brethren, &c. Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God; and, now observe how he had Discoursed of this Point before (ver. 17.) And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every mans work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear. In what fear does he mean? not in a slavish fear (as I shall shew you presently) but in a holy care, in a holy awe, in a wise and judicious search into things; and so he speaks: (ver. 7.) That the Tryal of your Faith being much more precious than of Gold that perisheth, though it be tried with Fire, might be found unto Praise and Honour and Glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. O let every one take this Scripture into Mind, into serious consideration, and pass the time of our sojourning here, in a holy, and wise, and judicious Awe and Fear: That the Tryal of our Faith, though it be tried with Fire, &c. Observe how notably the Apostle speaks, as if he should say, Your Faith will be tried with Fire, with the Fire of that Day, whether it be true and right Faith or not; And it will be tried in a moment, and instantly, because a short work will the Lord make upon the Earth. For (as I told you) it will appear presently, by the Thoughts we have about us, by the Company we come with, by the Bodies we have on; And this will be in the Face of the Fire you must come; and if it be only a drossy Faith, it won't stand the Fire; it won't be able to endure: If it be only a painted Faith, it will presently come to nothing: And (therefore saith the Apostle) look that your Faith be found to Honour, and Glory, and Praise at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*

And then, on the Side of the Foolish Virgins; Consider That in the 13th Chapter of Luke: 26. Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy Presence, and thou hast taught in our streets: They shall begin to say, when they find the Door shut upon them, They shall begin to say, Lord, We have Eat and Drunk in thy Presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me all ye workers of iniquity, ver. 24. Strive to enter in at the strait Gate, for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

I expound it Especially (though I don't deny, that at this time, there are some Half-seekers that cannot enter) But it is especially at that time, of the coming of the Bridegroom; They shall seek to enter, and they shall not be able. When once the Master of the House is risen up, and hath shut the Door, &c. Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

So here's the First thing; they endeavour to make the best of their profession, that they have had here in the World. So will all foolish Virgins do in all their Duties, of all that they have said for God, or any good works; but If the power of these things have not been, it will not be able to carry any out, though we shall endeavour to make the best of our Profession; that's the first Description of the State of the foolish Virgins, when they arise.

2. I come to the Second thing that our Lord here mentions, And that is,

They shall presently be sensible (pray observe that) that their Grace doth not hold out, that they were but counterfeit, that they were but dross, that they were but Tinsel. For presently they say, they want supply, Give us of your Oil, for our Lamps are gone out. It is a sad and woful thing, That a Man should lose all the Prayers, and all the Profession that he made here in the World: And yet, when he comes into his Body again, though he was sent out of the World with Prayers and Duties (I don't speak to discourage you in any of these things, but to provoke you to it, to look to the Life, and to the Power) presently say, My Lamp is gone out; all my Hearing and Praying is come to nothing, they did not go down to the root, to the bottom of my Heart and Life, they are become nothing, Our Lamps are gone out. This is suitable to the expression we read in the Proverbs: It is said, that

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the Lamp of the wicked shall be put out in obscure darkness! O how great will that Darkness be, when that Light that is in us, shall be plainly found, and felt, and perceived to be Darkness! O what a miserable thing is it, when a Man shall be forced to say, All my Religion and Profession, it is gone out, it is a Lamp gone out! Our Lamps are gone out: It is a most hideous Representation of the thing, as could be made: We walked in the Light of our Lamps, when we were here in the World; And now, when all comes to the Tryal of the Day, and of the fire, when it comes to be Examined, indeed, Our Lamps are gone out. Just as if a Man were entring into some dark Vault; as you know, Miners, they go with Lights, and as soon as they come into the dark and black of the Vapours, their Lights presently go out, and they know not which way to go, nor how to guide themselves: And so in that Day, it will be a very lamentable and terrible state to us, to be forced to say, That Our Lamps are gone out.

3. In the Third place, you may consider this now, that they would light their Lamps again: They would furnish themselves with Oil from those that they have joined with in the World, while they were here in the World; They said unto the Wife, *Give us of your Oil, for our Lamps are gone out.* There is an Endeavour to pin themselves (as it were) upon the Saints and Servants of God, with whom they held a Converse and Correspondence here: They say, *Give us of your Oil;* Shall we be no better, That you have prayed and professed with us; and that you have heard the Word of God with us, and that we were joined with you; shall this do us no good? *Give us of your Oil.* But you see,

4. In the Fourth Place, There is no manner of Relief that way; no good at all will be done us, if we have not the power of Faith and Repentance in our selves; If we have not real converse, and Communion with, and Union to Jesus Christ, it will do us no good at that Day, that we have had our Conversation and Worship, that we have had our Communion with the Servants of God.

It is said (Matth. 8. 11.) *That many shall come from the East and West, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven, but the Children of the Kingdom (there's the great Emphasis of the thing) shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth:* Though they were the Children of the Kingdom, and though they had a Right

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in regard of the Glorifying, they had made of being their *Children*: So that it is not our Converse and Communion with Saints, or our being of a Church; it will do no Man any good to be the Son or Daughter of such a Church, (as some Men love to speak) or to be a Member of such a Church, as others speak: I say, these things will do us no good, if we have not the Power and Life of Grace in our hearts, *Let every Man prove his own Work* (as the Apostle saith) *and then he shall have rejoicing in himself, and not in another.* And so in this regard, we may further understand the Circumstances, in which the *foolish Virgins* arise: They cannot have the least advantage, or the least good, by all the Saints that they have known, and have kept company with, or heard, or Received the Lords Supper with: Nay, though they had *Eat and Drunk in Christ's Presence*; and if they had heard Christ himself, it would have done them no good, without the Power wherewith Christ taught them in. I speak not this, that we should slight the Society of Saints, but that we should love them entirely, and our *delight* should be in them, as in the *Excellent of the Earth*. But still, we must have the *same spirit of Faith* with them; *or else it will do us no good: No, say they, *not so, lest we have not enough for our selves and you.*

Which shews indeed, the Vanity and Folly of Popery, in carrying Men upon the hopes of other Men; the Merits of such a Saint, and such a Saint: It is a thing so silly, and so foolish and beggarly in Religion, that I don't think it worth the speaking of; but there have been times, when such Foppery and Foolery hath taken place upon Multitudes of this Nation; but blessed be God it is not so now: Though there be multitudes of Persons that would have gone upon the Faith and Holiness, and the Charity, even by way of Judgment and Opinion, of such a Saint heretofore: But I think it not worth the spending much time on the Opinion, but on the mistake of Professors now. I go on to the next Particular: And that is, *They went to buy.*

What is the meaning of this but only this; their vehemency, if it were possible for them to mend their Faith, to mend their Repentance at that time: It is a shadow of this, O that it were possible now, That instead of the false Faith I have, I might have a true Faith; I would have a true Repentance upon any Terms whatsoever. O the Cry that *Foolish Virgins* will make,

when they have had Opportunity, and lost their Opportunity! While they went to buy, the Bridegroom came; and they that were ready, went in with him to the Wedding: They that were ready, that had true Faith and Repentance, just at the time that the others went to buy: And the Door was shut, and they came and said, Lord, Lord, Open to us; But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Wherein

First of all, We may observe, as I said, They would have it at any rate, if it were possible to be had, the Truth of Faith, and the Truth of Repentance, and the Truth of Holiness, and of the Spirit of God dwelling in them; But while they were endeavouring to amend, and to repair what they had so miserably been mistaken in while they were here; They find, There's no Amendment in that State, They find, that there is no going over the thing again. *Work therefore (saith Christ) while it is day; for the Night cometh when no Man can work.* And therefore, let us look to it, while we are here in the World.

I shall therefore close the Discourse, in the brief Application of it.

1. In the First Place, it teaches us very seriously to consider, and so far as any of us have Opportunity, to Propagate the knowledge of this thing, among all the Prophane and Wicked of the World; so far as (I say) they will bear it; or that we can have place to speak so much to them; To consider, if *foolish Virgins* will not be accepted in that Day; O! What will be the End of those that are so boldly and insolently prophane and wicked?

It were a happy thing indeed, in regard of the present state of things, and of the hopes of something better; That we could prevail upon Persons that we know, are prodigiously Contemners of God, and bold in Sin, and Railers at, and Scoffers of every thing that is good, and that wallow like Swine in the Mire, and that are drinking up the Vomit of their Sins perpetually, and doing the same things over and over again. O that Persons would be prevailed with to read the First of the *Proverbs*! And to draw the Land-scaph of their Case, by looking upon *Belshazzar*, and reading his Story: I say, That they would be prevailed with: Men that are Carousing and shewing their Contempt of God, and of every thing sacred, Oh that they might be prevailed with. For (as the Apostle saith) *If the righteous be scarcely sav-*

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ed, and foolish Virgins perish, where shall the Wicked and Ungodly appear? And

2. In the Second Place; Then let every one of us, as I hope, upon the generality, there may be drawn this Title of a *Virgin*, without any injury done to Christ; I hope, we do make a Profession of God and Christ, seriously; We do Pray and Hear, and wait upon God in his Word, and read the Scripture, and we are serious in drawing nigh to Christ at his Table; I say, I hope the Title of the *Virgin* may be put upon many of us, in these regards.

But, Let it not be grievous to any of us (either Hearer or Speakers) to consider this, That there are *Foolish Virgins*, as well as *Wise*: You may have a very desirable and commendable Profession of Christianity upon you: We may have this, and yet be *foolish Virgins*.

Consider seriously, If there be folly in our Virginity, it will utterly spoil it, it will be such a *Dead Fly* in the Ointment of *Virginity*, that it will certainly spoil and poison all: As our Lord speaks, *If the Salt have lost its savour*: The Word in the Greek is, if it be *foolish Salt*, it goes to the *Dunghil*: There may be *Virginity*, but if it be *foolish Virginity*, it will come to be said, *Our Lamps are gone out*: We have heard and profest Christianity with you, but lo! now *Our Lamps are gone out*! We cannot hold out; Immediately the Fire of that Day (as we say, the Sun will put out those little Fires) So the Fire of that Day, the Glory of that Day, will put out our *Lamps*.

But this is that Point, That I shall especially Discourse to you, next, To shew you, *Wherein is the difference between a Lamp that goes out, and a Lamp that is furnished with the Treasure of Oil still within itself*; That hath still new supply, that hath a Fountain to supply it; That doth not go out, upon the very spot, as we say: And, if the Lord enable me to clear so great a Point, (to the Conviction of every one, that both hears and speaks) How great might the advantage be? For, I would not discourage any from his Profession; God forbid; that any one should be stopp'd or hinder'd in the way of Christianity, so far as they have proceeded; but yet you see, this is a necessary faithfulness, to be told of our danger, and perswaded and convinced of it, if by any means we might escape out of the Snare, that the *Snare might be broken, and we escape*.

The Third Application I make is this :

3. That according to the assurance I have given you, and that I profess in the Presence of God, with greatest sincerity, upon duest Consideration, to be more and more assured, *That the Kingdom of Jesus Christ draws very near, and very hard, and very fast upon us* ; That therefore you would have another Consideration of these things, than those that lived a great way off of the Time. For, though it is true, if any of us come to die, it will be the same case, as if the Day of Judgment were just now upon him ; but yet still, the Scripture makes use of this, as a further and higher Argument, *It is high time now to awake, the Night passeth, the Day is at hand, your Salvation is nearer* ; And therefore, I beseech you, That you would seriously take it into Consideration, and to Heart, That the *ends of the World* must needs be upon us ; For, if the Apostle said, that the *Ends of the World came upon them*, so many Hundred Years since, how can it be, but that the *Ends of the World* must be upon us ? We are on the very last Sands of the Glass of the World : And therefore, Let this *Preaching of John the Baptist, and Christ* be in all your Ears and Hearts, *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand* : Look to be *wise Virgins*, for the *Bridegroom* will not long delay his coming : He hath delay'd it so long, but will not delay it long now : And then,

4. In the last Place, I beseech you, be not so afraid of the Coming of the *Kingdom of Christ* : This will be your great advantage ; If any would choose, they would choose to see the *Kingdom of Christ in its succession* : For, I have always taken care to distinguish to you these two.

There is a great Difference betwixt the *Kingdom of Christ* coming in its *Glory*, as it shall be at the Time designed by this Text and Parable ; and another thing intended by its *Succession*, Rev. 11. 15. As a King Enting upon his Reign ; which you know, is immediately, and as soon as the former King went off, and (as they speak) Demised, It is another thing, his Inauguration : You know there is a distance of Time, between the Enting in of the Reign, and Succession ; and the Coronation, the great Time of Glory : And so there's a difference betwixt Christ's coming, when the *Midnight-Cry* shall be, and his coming into the *Succession* of his *Kingdom* : For, there shall be a wonderful pouring out of the Spirit of God, as soon as ever the *Kingdom of Christ*

Christ shall come into its Succession ; There shall be a mighty Preaching of the Everlasting Gospel ; Christianity shall grow much higher, much more pure, much more efficacious ; there shall be bringing in multitudes of Gentiles, that are now Unbelievers in Christ, Mahometan or Pagan ; Antichristians, and the Ancient Israel coming in, as I have often said : Who then can be perswaded, that it shall be possible to see the Jews and Gentiles flocking in to Christ, and that there should be any, that should not believe in Christ, and receive his Gospel ? And therefore, I say, know assuredly, That it will be a great advantage to you.

And, for my part, There's nothing that I more earnestly desire, or have a greater value for, than to see the Dawns of the *Kingdom of Christ* ; Oh ! That God would give any of us leave to see this, We should have great advantage of making our *Calling and Election sure, of working out our salvation with fear and trembling, of being perswaded of the things that pertain to the Kingdom of God* ; we should have great opportunities every way ; And therefore, as Christ speaks, when he propounded the Parable to them, *Matth. 13. 17. I say unto you, That many Prophets and Righteous Men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them : So if God shall continue any of our lives, but a few years, to see the Kingdom of Christ appearing in this First Glory ; O happy and blessed shall we be ! For, from the very beginning and foundation of the World to this day, Many Prophets and Righteous Men have desired to see those things which we shall see then, and have not seen them ; and to hear those things that we shall hear, and have not heard them.*

In the mean time, Let none of us be discouraged, if God call us sooner out of the World ; For, as the Apostle saith, *All those that are Christ's, he will certainly bring with him* : And, it will certainly be a happier and securer state, to be *sleeping in Jesus, and dying in Jesus* ; For though we do not see these things here, our Spirits shall see them above ; and our Bodies shall be raised in Glory for us to come with Christ in : And as to those who are not as they desire to be, for my part, I know not any thing can be spoken for better Tydings, or any thing that should more earnestly engage our Faith, and Prayer, than to have that great opportunity, to wind up our Faith and Love, and Repentance, to their own height ; even that of the *Coming of the Kingdom of Christ into its*

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Succession, and to see those blessed things, and to hear them, that many excellent persons have desired to see, and hear, and have not: And therefore, let none be offended, that the Kingdom of Christ is near at hand; for, we shall have greater, and more blessed advantages and opportunities, to make our *Calling and Election sure*, when that time comes.

Let us therefore desire, to hear those loud Voices from Heaven Proclaim, *That the Kingdoms of this World, are become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ*: On which will soon follow that pouring out of the Spirit, and the *Preaching the Everlasting Gospel*.

S E R M O N V I I I.

On Matthew 25. v. 6, &c.

And at Midnight there was a Cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.

Then all those Virgins arose, and trimmed their Lamps.

And the Foolish said unto the Wise, Give us of your Oil, for our Lamps are gone out, &c.

I Have led you through several parts of this great and admirable Parable: The last thing I Discoursed to you, was concerning the *Midnight-Cry*, and endeavoured to shew you:

That though there might be some use made of it, as a Description of any Judgment, that should come upon the Churches of Christ, before his Coming; Yet, That the Principal Intention is, That Cry, That Voice of the Son of God, That Shout that the Lord will descend in, That Voice of the Archangel, That Trump of God, that shall raise all that are asleep in their Graves, and shall bring them forth.

I Endeavoured to open to you, *That every one shall rise in the very same Circumstances wherein they lay down in Death, and in the Grave.*

And therefore, That the Day of Judgment coming upon Prophane and Insolent Persons, upon the *Fools that say in their hearts, There is no God*, will be like the *Writing of the Fingers on the Wall*

Will before Belshazzar, that we read of *Dan. 5.* And as it comes upon ignorant Persons in Christianity, and upon the Worldlings, those *Fools* that say, *We have much Goods laid up for many Years;* and therefore, *Soul, Take thy ease, Eat, Drink and be Merry.* O! what an Earthquake will it be upon them, to see the *Kingdom of Christ!* Now, They shall be raised, both the *Fools* that say, *That there is no God,* and the Worldlings, &c. They shall be raised just in the same Terror, in the same Consternation, as if the Earthquake was now upon them, or in the Time of Life, now on Earth.

But I proposed to shew you also, *Wherein the state of the foolish, and the wise Virgins differ;* wherein this great difference lies, *That one enter into the Wedding, and the other are shut out.*

And that is it, which now, by the assistance of God, I would undertake, and go forward, to give you a clear Representation of this great Matter: For (as I told you) *Virgins*, bespeaks a being of the Pure and True Religion; the true Religion of the Gospel, the Doctrine of God in the Gospel: For all, whatsoever false Doctrine, or false Worship does adulterate this, it is called in Scripture, not by the Name of *Virginity*, but by the Name of *Whoredom*, by the Name of Adultery and Fornication..

Whatever defiles the Religion of Jesus Christ, is not stiled *Virginity*, but by other Names; And therefore it is certain, That these *Virgins* must be of the truest and of the purest Religion of Jesus Christ.

In the second Place I told you, *That they must needs be of a tolerable, sober Conversation:* They are not of the Prophane, the Drunkards or the Swearers, or the Sensualists of the World; but they are those, that walk in such unblameable life, that they are worthy to be counted, and to be stiled *Virgins*.

What a critical Case therefore, What a very nice and curious Point is this, that distinguishes between the *wise* and the *foolish Virgins?*

If therefore God shall be pleased, in any measure, to enable me to open this to you, and that you may aright conceive, and understand so great a Point; I hope, That by his Blessing, our coming together may be for the better, and not for the worse.

I shall therefore apply my self to it,

First, By considering the scope of the Parable in this Matter: And, I find, That it lies here:

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The one had *Oyl* in their *Lamps*, but they had not *Oyl* in their *Vessels*.

The other had *Oyl* in their *Vessels* as well as in their *Lamps*.

So, that it comes to this; One hath a Treasure, a Store of Grace, beyond the Profession, the other hath not.

I shall Answer very plainly, and down-right Discourse in this thing; by leading you to some great Expressions of Scripture, which do to me assure, what our Lord intends. In the Third Chapter of the Epistle to the *Ephesians*, v. 16, &c. The Apostle, in that Great and Excellent Prayer, begs of the *Father of Glory*; the *Father of Glory*! An Expression most suitable and agreeable to the Kingdom of Christ, appearing in its Glory, to which this Parable refers: *That he would grant you, according to the riches of his Glory, to be strengthened with might, by his Spirit in the inner man: That Christ may dwell in your hearts by Faith*: I look upon this to be *Oyl in the Vessel*. It is Christ abiding in the heart: For tho' indeed the *Vessel* is not the *Fountain*; yet it speaks the *Vessel* closely conjoyned with the *Fountain*; and the *Fountain* continually springing into't.

Another place of Scripture that I would give you: You know *Faith* and *Love*, they are much required and insisted on in the Gospel, now observe what the Apostle saith, in the *1 Tim. 1. 14*. *And the Grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant, with Faith and Love which is in Christ Jesus*: Where is the Treasure of *Faith* and *Love*? It is in Christ Jesus, it is never out of him; the Spring of it is never out of him; *Faith and Love which is in Christ Jesus*; The Spring overflows to the *Vessel*, with *Faith* and *Love*, but the Spring and the *Fountain* is Christ himself.

And so, *2 Tim. 2. 1*. *Thou therefore, my Son, be strong in the Grace that is in Christ Jesus: Be strong in the Grace that is in him*. It is never out of him, though it flows to the Souls and Spirits of Believers, yet it is never out of Christ.

So that here is the *Oyl* in the Treasure of it; it is when the Soul is united to Christ, the *Fountain* of it; here is the *Oyl* that is able to bear up.

For, in two things, I think, the comparison lies, that our Lord intended in this Parable, between *Grace* and *Oyl*.

First, It must needs be of such an excellent quality, that it can bear up with the *Glory* of that Day; And then,

In the Second place, It must be so abundant, that it can last with the *Glory* of that Day.

For,

For, if the Oil be not of the high and excellent kind; it will presently go out.

As you know, the higher Light of the Sun, it puts out the lower Light of Fire or Tapers, that we have below; so the Glory of that Day will put out any Light, but only the Light of the Righteousness and Grace that is in Jesus Christ, and none else will last; There's no Spring of Light, but only that which comes from him, Heb. 7. 16. *who is after the power of an endless life.* It is only Christ that is Oil in the Treasure; Therefore, take the most Excellent Grace; That's the Point that I would endeavour to carry out to you: Take the most Excellent Grace; if it be out of Christ, if it be only in the Person himself, it is a Lamp that will go out; but if the Vessel be at the Fountain Head, and is joined to the Fountain; then it is able to supply to the Glory of that Day.

And I shall represent it to you therefore, by a History of Scripture, that may serve as an excellent Parallel, to Expound the Parable that I am now upon; In 2 Kings 4. 1. *There cried a certain Woman of the Wives of the Sons of the Prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy Servant my Husband is dead, and thou knowest that thy Servant did fear the Lord; and the Creditor is come to take unto him my two Sons to be Bond-men. And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee? Tell me, What hast thou in the House? And she said, Thine Hand-Maid hath not any thing in the House, save a Pot of Oil. Then he said, Go, Borrow thee Vessels abroad of all thy Neighbours, even empty Vessels, borrow not a few. And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the Door upon thee, and upon thy Sons, and shall pour out into all those Vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full. So she went from him, and shut the Door upon her, and upon her Sons, who brought the Vessels to her, and she poured out. And it came to pass, when the Vessels were full, that she said unto her Son, bring me yet a Vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a Vessel more. And the Oil stayed.*

Now this is the thing only, That I would represent to you; That to us, that are in a miserable and needy, and wanting condition, and in danger to be Bond-Men and Bond-Women to the Wrath and Justice of God for ever, Here is the Oil multiplied; The Oil multiplies from the Fountain, from the Infinite Grace that is in Jesus Christ, that we may stand at that Day.

And therefore, That which I would advise, and press upon every one of us, from this very Point is, *That above all things we*

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would mind our being in Christ. I shall endeavour to free it from all Objections that you may be ready to make, before I close the Point.

But, to give you a Parable, or a Representation that is nearer, and does indeed intend this very thing; If you look into the Prophet *Zachary*, you shall see what it is to have *Oil*, not only in the *Lamp*, but in the *Vessel*; that is, to have a continual supply.

For, though indeed, this Parable seems to go no further, than *Oil* in the *Vessel*; yet when we come to enter into it, we must needs find, that it must be *Oil* from the *Fountain* alone, that can do us good, *Zach. 4. 1, 2.* And the Angel that talked with me, came again, and waked me, as a Man that is wakened out of his sleep; And said unto me, what seest thou? and I said, I looked, and behold, a Candlestick all of Gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his Seven Lamps thereon, and Seven Pipes to the Seven Lamps, which were upon the top thereof: And two Olive-Trees by it, one upon the Right side of the Bowl, and the other upon the Left side thereof. And it came to that; The Sons of oyl (as they are called, *v. 12.*) through the Golden Pipes empty the Golden Oil out of themselves into the Golden Bowl.

Now, What's the Meaning of all this? Not by Might, nor by Power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord; that's the Meaning of all: They Empty the Golden Oil out of themselves.

That Golden Oil, by which our Lamps will bear up and shine at that Day, it must come from those Sons of Oyl; That is, From those Olive-branches, Both which are only a Representation of Christ's Fulness in his Righteousness, and in his Spirit.

So that here is that, that alone can bear us up, and bear up the Shining of our Lamps in that Day of the Glorious Solemnity of the Marriage of the Lamb: That which alone can bear us up, is the Righteousness and Spirit of Jesus Christ; Which are always Connected and Joyned one with another.

And, Proportionable hereunto are other Similitudes; The Wedding-Garment, that we read of, *Matt. 22.* which, a Man not having on, when he came to the Wedding, he was found Speechless; That is Nothing, but the Garment of the Righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the Graces of his Spirit. The King came in to see the Guests, he saw there a Man which had not on a Wedding-Garment; (The same with Oyl in the Vessel:) And he saith unto him, Friend, How camest thou in hither, not having a Wedding Garment? And he was Speechless; Bind him Hand and Foot, and take him away, saith Christ, and cast him into outer Darknes, because he had not the

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Linen White and Clear, the Righteousness of Saints, Robes washed in the Blood of the Lamb; for that's the Wedding-Garment. He had not put on the Wedding-Garment of Christ; he had not on the White Raiment. Buy of me Gold tryed in the Fire, and White Raiment (suitable to that Time) and buy of me Eye-Salve, that thou may'st see, &c. Rev. 3. All is from Christ. So that the Whole Matter is This; Whether we are in Christ, or whether we are not in Christ?

So the Apostle John saith, 1 John 5. 12. *He that hath the Son, (here's the plain Proposition, the Case of every Man) He that hath the Son, hath Life; And he that hath not the Son of God, hath not Life: And this is the Record, that God hath given to us Eternal Life, (the Place is as full to the Purpose, as possibly can be) God hath given to us Eternal Life, and this Life is in his Son, in the Fountain. The Sun of Righteousness arises with healing in his Wings. He that hath the Son, hath Life, and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not Life: And hereby, we may understand that great Place of Scripture, which else may be more hard to be understood, Rom. 9. 28. saith the Apostle there, out of the Prophet Isaiah. A short work (saith he) will the Lord make upon the Earth: What is the meaning of that, That he will make such a short Work upon the Earth? The Meaning is this, That it shall come to this speedy Question: Are you in Christ? Or are you not in Christ? For he will finish the Work, and cut it short in Righteousness; because a short Work will the Lord make upon the Earth. A short Work.*

Many are ready to think, That the Judiciary part of the Day of Judgment will be a mighty long time; Because every Case of a Man must be examined, and his Works; It is a Mistake, when we think so.

For though it will be, as exact to every Man, as if every Man's Case were laid down in his particular Works, viz. of those who are not pardoned; But yet it will be a time of the blotting out of Iniquity; I say, a Time of the full blotting out of Sin, in all the Servants of God; Though Sins are sought for, they shall not be found, There shall be none, but upon the Wicked.

A short Work will the Lord make upon the Wicked, when they are found not to be in Christ; They have not a biding Light; They are presently found by the Company they are in, and by the Habit of the Body; For the Saints are in the Habit of Bodies of Glory; And the other, in the Habit of Bodies of Contempt:

So, a *short Work will the Lord make*: It will be presently seen by our Appearance, whether we are Christ's, or no.

Now this I shall endeavour to Argue to you a little from Scripture-Reason, And then it shall be the Principal Part of this Discourse to clear to you the Doubts and Scruples, and Objections, that may arise in your Minds; That this cannot be so.

First, In regard of other Scriptures, that insist so much upon what is in us; And then to Answer these Questions.

In the Second Place, you may say,

How shall we come to have an Interest in Christ? And

In the Third Place; How shall we know, That we have an Interest in Christ?

And so I shall conclude with the Application of All.

The Great Scripture-Argument I would give you, is this:

If we could seriously consider the Infinite Holiness, and Purity of God; If we could but (I say) seriously lay this to Heart; That God cannot see Things, any other ways than they are, How would it clear this? A great many Good Men are ready to say,

The *Evangelical Righteousness* that we have, shall stand before God, in Justification; for Christ's sake.

I say, If we seriously consider, That God is Infinitely Holy; That *the Angels be charges with Folly*; That *the Heavens are not clean in his Sight*; That he cannot see any otherwise, than Things are: I do beseech you to consider, Whether you would venture into the Presence of such a Holiness, with the Best Graces, that you know in any Person in the World? For my part, I do not know how Men can Answer it in their own Judgments: But I think, it is as impossible for any Man to appear with the Holiness of the best Saint, that ever was in the World, (except the Righteousness of Christ) as I think it impossible for a Man to stand in the Greatest Presence, without Confusion, having nothing but the Squallidness, and Filthiness of Impure Garments, and Putrefaction all over him. For, surely, the Saints of God speak in the Name of all Saints; *All our Righteousnesses are as filthy Rags*; and *our Iniquities, like the Wind, hurry us away*: And there's no standing, but by that stable Righteousness of Jesus Christ, *Jehovah* our Righteousness, and by the Holiness that flows from his Death, and from his Resurrection, and that is under the Cover of his Blood, and under the Answer, that his Righteousness makes for the Imperfection of it.

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I am sure, this Reason is so solid, so substantial, and so weighty; That whoever Considers it, must needs yield, and submit to it, if they do not go off from it, but strictly and precisely consider it; That no other Righteousness can be accepted, but only the Righteousness of Christ, and the Holiness that flows from it, that needs the Cover of his Righteousness, and is made up in its own Imperfection, by the Perfection of his Righteousness.

Surely, it must be a great Hazard, for such a Person as Paul, to go before the Judgment-Seat, with his own Righteousness, when he said, (even in a State of Grace, and in Jesus Christ) 1 Cor. 4. 4. *I know nothing by my self, yet am I not hereby justified;* For he that judgeth me, is the Lord: If we have not now the Righteousness of Christ, How then can we stand before God!

I Argue this, not so much, to make you of an Opinion, or a Judgment; (for that I ought not to aim at) but with the utmost Sincerity, as God enables me, that you may know, your Peace, and Safety, and Security lies only in the Righteousness of Christ.

That Lamp will certainly be put out in obscure Darkness, that hath not the Golden Oil: And therefore I speak, that you may have your Hearts full of this; Christ, and Christ only. I am so far from being moved by any Objection, that I am assured, That this is the True Grace of God that I now Preach to you, wherein we are all to stand: We read, Heb. 24. *Christ is not entered into the Holy Places made with Hands, which are Figures of the true, but into Heaven it self, now to appear in the Presence of God for us:* We Translate it, *In the Presence of God;* but the Greek is much more Emphatical: He Appears, or is made apparent to the Face of God for us: Now, Christ is present with, and makes himself appear to the very Face of God; That Face, that is Ten Thousand times Brighter than the Sun, and that Dazles all Created Righteousness; Christ appears to that very Face, and he appears now, in his own Blood, to that very Face, for us. Herein is our great Comfort, when we come before the Face of God; Christ appears to that very Face, in our Behalf: It is further said, *Nor yet that he should offer for himself often, as the High-Priest Offer'd other Sacrifices: For then must he often have Suffered, since the Foundation of the World.*

It may be, you only read this, with a General Thought of it; and may not have considered the deep Sense, and the Importance of it.

For,

For, I ask, Why Christ must have Suffered often, from the Foundation of the World, if he had not been a Lamb slain, once for All?

The Answer is, If his Offering had not been an Offering once for All, It must have arisen from the Insufficiency of it, the Weakness, and Imperfection of it, to have done All at once; and then he must, (as the Apostle says) Have Suffer'd often, since the Foundation of the World; and not have Died only 1700 Years ago, when the World was about 4000 Years old; but he must have Suffer'd from the very Foundation of the World: He must have begun there, where the Sin of Man, the Apostacy of Adam enter'd, and he must still have been Suffering; For the World could not have been born up, but by the Efficacy of his Sacrifice, and therefore it must still have been renew'd. The World hath been variously divided, the Old World before the Flood, and then before the Law, and since the Law till Christ; It is capable of more Divisions; but divide it as we can, I do not see how any Division of it could have been without the Sacrifice of Christ, nor how often each Division would have requir'd the Benefit of it, if once Offering had not been for All; but because once Offering of a Lamb without Spot, by the Eternal Spirit, doth Perfect and Consecrate for ever to the Enjoyment of God, and Freedom from Wrath Them who are Sanctified from the Guilt and the Power of Sin; And so it looks backward to all such before it, as a Lamb slain, from the Foundation of the World, and forward to all, who shall be to the Delivery up of the Kingdom to God All in All, and even throughout Eternity, supporting Saints in their Union to the Father and his Love by Himself: Hence this Great High-Priest chose his Time in the End of the World, shewing the Right of Christ, to have put an end upon this Sunk, Fallen, Defiled World; but that for Wisest and Holiest Purposes, Vision and Prophecy, in the Great Efficacy of his Redemption were Seal'd, and now of necessity are near to be opened: This was the Fulness of Time, not far from the Fulness of Times, or of all Time; That is, from the Kingdom of Christ.

Now on this Foundation of his Sacrifice for ever perfecting Them who are Sanctified, we learn, That as All is Deriv'd from Christ, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, Redemption; So it is Conserv'd in him, he hath for ever perfected, as in himself; For all still rests in him, and depends upon Fresh Receivings from him,
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as is most evident in this ; He went immediately *into the Holy Places made without Hands*, there to appear in the Presence of God ; or according to the Force of the Greek, there to be made Illustrious to the very Face of God for us : So that notwithstanding what he hath done, we could not dare to appear to the Face of God, if he were not there for us, appearing to that very Face, receiving the Grace, and Favour of it, and Reflecting it on us : And so in Sanctification, in the strictest, and most proper Sense of it, It is continually Issuing from his Blood ; The Blood of the Everlasting Covenant sends forth the Efficacy of *making perfect in every good Work, working in us*, that which is *well pleasing in his Sight*.

Now then from hence arises a Necessity of continual Looking to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith, in both Justification and Sanctification.

Take then, as in relation to the Point of Justification, our Faith, our Love, our Repentance, our Charity, our Holiness, our Obedience, and separate these from the Satisfaction, Righteousness of Jesus Christ, and how can they stand before God on any account whatever, even in the Sense of All that do at all acknowledge Christ ! But beyond this, How pitiful are they, compar'd with Everlasting Righteousness, with Infinite Righteousness ! Nay, so Imperfect, and so Polluted are they, that they cannot so much as enter into any the least Consideration in the Point of Righteousness, or Justification, but they must needs before a Righteous, and Holy God, Themselves, and the Persons, in whom they are, fall under Condemnation : And in point of Holiness, if you divide them from Christ, They are like a Beam, or a Ray cut off from the Sun, it immediately vanishes, and comes to nothing ; As therefore, The Conscience truly enlightned, will say ; Alas, I cannot come before God with this, and that, which looks like Godliness, Holiness, or what we call Religion, as in Prayer, or other Duties ; I must have the Infinite Righteousness of Jesus Christ, else I know my Lamp will immediately go out : So in point of Sanctification, even that Holiness we receive from Christ, all its Excellency and Life is in Union to Christ, If it be separate from him, it is like a Drop out of the Fountain ; A Drop in the Fountain is considerable, while it is in it ; If you separate it from it, it presently is lost, and comes to nothing : My Son (says he unto Timothy) be strong in the Grace, that is in Jesus Christ ; it must be in him, Conserv'd in him ; Else, it is as a Ray wandering from the Sun,

or

or a Drop from the Fountain, or to speak in the Language of the Parable, as a *Lamp* from the *Vessel*, or even the *Vessel* from the *Son of Oil*: The Sum of all is, our dependance is on Christ alone, our Union, and Communion with him; He is the Fountain, he is the Great *Son of Oil*; All *Lamps* go out, not so united; In *Jehovah*, shall one say, *Have I Righteousness, and Strength, strength of Holiness also*; In him shall all his Seed be *Justified and Glory*.

Thus far I have endeavoured to fix and establish this Point to you; And from which, I hope, and am assur'd, I shall never find Reason to depart; That the *Oil in the Vessel*, is the Heart united to Jesus Christ by Faith; The *Having the Son*, and so *having Life*; For he is the Great *Son of Oil*, the *Branch made strong*, even the Fountain, the Root, the Spring to Eternity.

I shall now endeavour to answer, and to clear up, what may rise, by way of Objection, in any of our Thoughts to this Truth.

Object. I. *It may be said, All the Graces and Duties of Christianity, of Holiness, are they not spoken of, as received from, and done by the Power of Christ, and yet as if they were ours, and we stood by them before God, as in our selves? Is it not said of such a Saint, as of Enoch, That he walked with God? Of Noah, That he was Just, and Perfect, and Upright in his Generations, and that he Walked with God? Of Abraham, That he Believed in God, and it was imputed to him for Righteousness? Of David, and other Good Kings, That they Served God with an Upright Heart? Of Job, That he was an Upright, Perfect Man, That he Feared God, and Eschewed Evil? These Things seem to be spoken absolutely, and as if the Persons of whom they are spoken in these High Characters, Subsisted by themselves; Christ may indeed lie at the Bottom, and be the Foundation, why all is accepted, and all is upon his Account principally, but yet under him, these Qualifications may be considered as our Righteousness.*

Ans. Now to this I shall answer very plainly; That Scripture hath indeed laid this Foundation; Jesus Christ; and *Other no Man can lay*, that acknowledges the Gospel of Christ: And this being firmly settled, and the Consequences of it look'd every way into, the Key of All is given into our Hands: For though Scripture

ture speaks freely, and at large, and as may most serve in the Hand of the Spirit, as an Instrument to work upon the Hearts of those, who are in Christ; As, *Blessed are the Undeiled in the Way; Blessed are they that keep his Testimonies; Blessed is he that Considereth the Poor;* And Innumerable the like Scriptures; Which look, as if we had a Righteousness in our selves; Yet how exact, how positive is it in leading us to the Spring, to the Fountain, to the *Sun of Righteousness*, Christ; and thereby giving us (as I said) a Key into All! That All is, not only from him, but All is in him, (as the Sun holding all Light in it self,) while it shines from him; The Head holding all Influences within himself, the Root, Fountain, All in him, *we are from him: Noah was Righteous, because Heir of the Righteousness of Faith uniting to Christ: David describes, in relation to Abraham and all Saints, the Blessedness of the Man, to whom the Lord imputeth Righteousness without Works; It consists in Free Pardon, and not imputing Sin; Blessed is the Man (saith he) whose Iniquities are Forgiven, and whose Sins are covered; Blessed is the Man to whom the Lord imputeth not Sin: The Apostle Paul hath many high Expressions shewing the Necessity of Holiness; and yet he says, I desire to be found in Christ, not having my own Righteousness, but that, which is by the Faith of the Son of God; as David says, We will make mention of thy Righteousness, even of thine only. Thus, notwithstanding all the Holiness, and Graces of Believers, the Righteousness of Christ is their Righteousness alone, in the Point of Justification; And this Righteousness never goes out of himself, for then it would soon fail; But it is always Conserved in himself, he is *Jehovah, our Righteousness: And so our Holiness, the inward Holiness of Saints dwells in him, and from him is continually communicated, even while the Gracious Frame is fixed in them; Yet the Frame is in Union to him, we are in Christ Jesus, or in Union to him, Created to Good Works; In Christ Jesus is the New Creature, or New Creation; We know him first, and then the Power of his Resurrection; He is our Sanctification, and our very Wisdom for Faith and Repentance; We are Married unto him, that is Risen from the Dead, that we may bring forth Fruits unto God; So that All is not only from him, but in him: All therefore that is spoken of, as in us, or by us, is no other, but like the Attributing such and such Things to the Eyes, or to the Hands, and Feet. There is a Preparation of each Member to the Uses, and Offices proper to it, but the very Active Part is proper to the Head alone,**

and to that Spirit dwelling in it, without which they are but Lumps of Clay ; So that Graces, and Gracious Actions are attributed to Believers who are the Curious *Workmanship of God* to such Good Works ; but it is, as they are in Christ, in whom their Spiritual Life always resides, in and from whom it flows to them ; So that the Oyl in the *Vessel* shining through the *Lamp* is still in Union to him, the Great *Messiah*, or Anointed of God.

Object. 2. *A Second Objection, may be taken from that, in this Matth. 25, 34. You know, it is there said, When Christ had set the Goats on the Left Hand, and the Sheep on the Right ; He speaks in this manner ; Then shall the King say unto them, Come ye Blessed of my Father, Inherit the Kingdom prepared for you : For I was an hungry, and ye gave me Meat ; I was Thirsty, and ye gave me Drink ; A Stranger, and ye took me in ; Naked, and ye clothed me ; Sick and in Prison, and ye Visited me : And so on the other side, he said to the Wicked, Ye did not so and so ; And ye did nothing to my Succour and Relief : Is it not plain therefore, may Men say, That it is not according to the Righteousness of Christ, or a Being in Christ, but according as we have done ?*

Now I'll give you a clear Answer agreeable to what I said before : It is true, Where Christ hath laid the Foundation, and hath opened the Spring of his Righteousness, he takes any Grace he pleases, and Insists upon it ; Because it is all of the Contexture, and Frame, and whole Webb (as I may say) of his Righteousness ; It is Weav'd out of his Righteousness, and Redemption : And therefore, he'll take what Grace soever he pleases, because it is in the Fountain still ; It is all in the Sun, and in the Fountain : As if the Sun should say, Here's such or such a Particle of Light, and it shall do any thing proportionable to the Nature of such a Beam of Light ; But, consider, such a Beam is in me ; But if it go out of me, it will presently be as a Lamp gone out.

So, our Faith, our Love, or our Repentance, or our Holiness, take them in the Fountain, and in the Spring, they are of great Moment : If you take them out, they are nothing at all : So here's the Case.

Because the *Robes* of the *Saints* are Wash'd all over in the *Blood of Christ* ; And because all our Graces are in him, as in the Fountain,

tain, they are of great Value, not any to be taken in the single Grace, by it self, (though Christ is pleased to instance in this, or that, as he sees meet) but whether one or more are spoken of, they are all spoken of, as they are in the whole Orb, and the whole Body and Sphere of Light, his own Righteousness and Perfection; And they all are Communicated from him: And therefore it is, that these Graces are spoken so Graciously of, because they are in him.

In the Third Place, you may say, *But suppose I am satisfied and convinced, That it is not what is in my Self, but what is in Christ, where all my Perfections are made up, and where every thing is in Purity and Perfection; This is the Great Thing lies upon me, That I don't know how to come to Christ, that I may be his, and that he may be mine.*

And therefore, this is that I shall Answer to you; There are under the Profession of Christianity two Sorts of Men.

First, Those that never care for these Things, that never mind them, that never consider them, that never ask the Question, Whether Christ is theirs, or not? Nor have any Thought, or any Trouble about it: Now, to such Persons, there's no great need of answering; It is a vain Thing to Resolve Cases of Conscience to an Atheist, to him that saith, *There's no God, There's no Religion*: So it is in vain to answer such Scruples to the Man that never minds Christ, or considers himself, Whether in Christ, or not?

But, if there are any of us, that are really under the Sense of the Want of Christ, and of the Greatness of that Want, If there be any such; Why then there is not at any time such a Thought in our Hearts as this, Whether we are Christ's, or not, but it is a Hopeful Argument, That Jesus Christ doth Call us, and does Invite us: He doth Call and Invite us, or else, Why should it so be, That we are concerned and troubled about our having, or not having of him? Our Case is just like the Case of that Blind Man in the Gospel, that we read of, Mark 10. 46. *When they were come to Jericho, there was a great Number of People: And Blind Bartimeus, the Son of Timeus, sat by the Way-side, Begging: And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, Jesus, thou Son of David, have Mercy on me: And*

many charged him that he should hold his Peace: They would not have him make such ado after Christ; But he cry'd the more a great deal, *Thou Son of David, have Mercy on me.* And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called; And they call the Blind-Man, saying unto him, *Be of good Comfort, rise, he calleth thee.* I would only make an Allusion, and so an Application of this: Christ coming near him, Invited his Desires, and when he Desired, Christ further Invited him.

When we find our Souls moved with any thing of the Sense of the Want of Christ, or Desire after him; It is a sign Christ is coming near to us, and when we find that, let us cry out more earnestly after him, and though our own Corruptions, our own Unbelief, our own Fears, our own Lusts say, *Don't make such a stir after Christ; They charge us to hold our Peace, and Satan charges us, and many Doctrines in the World, (yea, of some very good Men) they charge us to hold our Peace, and say,*

First of all, *Get more Humiliation and Sense of Sin; Get Holiness; Get Resolutions of being better, and don't expect and ask for Salvation, till you come so and so qualified.*

Now, I say, in this Case, Let us cry so much the more; For if we want Humiliation, where should we have it, but only from Christ? If we want Resolutions to Holiness, where should we have them, but from Christ? It is not intended, that you should be negligent of Humiliation, or Sense of Sin, or Sorrow for it, or Resolutions for Holiness; But the Question is, Where shall we have these?

Now, I say, We can have them no where, but from Christ; From the First Item of coming to God, even from first to last, to an Everlasting Happiness, it is from God, it is from Christ; He calleth all those whose Souls are moved, and those that have had no more Sense of these things heretofore, than the very Stones and Stocks, than the very Heathen and Pagans; To all these, I say, If Christ do but move and stir you, fly ye to him, and say, *If I perish, I'll perish here: I know nothing in my want of Everlasting Life, but only coming to Christ to help me, may every Soul say.*

Objection. *But then you'll say, There's a Danger, that Men should Sleep, and do nothing, but put off all with coming to Christ.*

Don't

Don't fear this ; If we are indeed in Motion to Christ, be assured of this ; He'll come to you, and make himself further known to you ; And, in that very Moment, that you think to be doing something, look upon Christ as the very *Author* and *Finisher* of our Faith, and in his Strength go and do it ; For, surely, we may stand long enough fetching Water out of a Flint, till Jesus Christ, be pleased to turn the *Flint into a standing Water* : Such an Expression is in the *Psalms*.

So I say, The *Flint in the Heart*, the Heart of *Flint*, Christ will turn into a *Standing-Water* ; And it can never be done, till Christ do it.

And therefore, I know not how to advise such otherwise ; Many complain of the Want of this and that Grace, What Advice would you give us ? Alas ! Many would say, Be Industrious and Earnest ; I do not deny, but there's a Place for it, But, I say, It is for a Man to begin at the Wrong End of the Thing, to begin there without looking first to Christ : Let us therefore go to Christ ; For Faith and Love are in him abundant ; And he'll draw Souls to himself ; When *I am lifted up* (saith he) I will *Draw all Men to me* ; The Death of Christ upon the Cross was a Spiritual Emblem of this *Drawing* : And the *Father Draws*, and the Spirit *Convinces*, That Persons may by it be Drawn to Christ : It is therefore in the High and Supream Hand ; And when we have any Intimations and Motives upon us, to move, and to stir, still go to the Fountain ; Go to him that is the *Son of Oil* : These Rays and Beams lead to him that is the Spring of all Grace, from the very first to the last.

It is worthy our Consideration, that Place of the Prophet *Isaiah*, Chap. 22. last Verses, *And I will fasten him as a Nail in a sure Place, and he shall be for a Glorious Throne to his Father's House : And they shall hang upon him all the Glory of his Father's House, the Off-spring and the Issue ;* (The very Beginning and the End) Vessels of all Quantities ; from the Vessels of Cups, even to all the Vessels of Flagons ; They hang all upon him.

Now therefore, If you would hang your Humiliation, or Preparation, that's a *Vessel of the Off-spring*, and it is a small Vessel, a Vessel of small Quantity ; if you hang this any where, but upon the *Nail in the sure Place*, nothing of Good can be expected ; But, if you would hang, even the least *Vessel*, the *Vessel* of least Quantity any where, hang it upon Christ, Hang it upon the *Nail in the sure Place*.

And,

And, if any of you have any Troubled Thoughts, or Contest of Mind about these Things, I beseech you, That you would go up to this Nail that is fastned in a sure Place ; For that Vessel, that we hang any where else, it shall certainly be cut down, and the Nail we hang it upon will certainly be cut down, or removed, for the Lord hath spoken it ; All our Lamps that shine in their own Light, they will go out in that Day, at the Appearance of Christ, like Sparks, that we compass our selves with, of our own kindling ; All that do so, shall lie down in Sorrow.

The Last Objection is, *But, how shall we know that we are in Christ ? Can we discern it any otherwise, than by the Marks and Signs of Grace, that we find in our Selves ? If therefore we find not Faith, if we find not Repentance, and all the Fruits of Holiness, How can we think, or dare we think that we are in Christ ?*

Now therefore, To this I would give you this Twofold Answer.

First, It is certain, That the Supream Witness to any of our Souls, it must be from the Spirit of Christ, it must be from the Spirit of Adoption, crying Abba, Father.

He is called the Spirit of the Son ; I beseech you seriously consider it, Gal. 4. 6. *Because ye are Sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your Hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* Why does he call it the Spirit of the Son ? But to shew, that it is the Witness coming from Christ : If therefore it comes from him, The Great Witness of the Spirit is, That we are in Christ : It doth not come to us in our own Righteousness ; For then, Why should it be called, The Spirit of the Son ? No, not in our own Sanctification, does it come to us ; But it is, The Spirit of the Son ; And, It's a sure Testimony of its Glorifying Christ, in taking the Things that are Christ's, and Giving to us even in its Testimony.

You may say, This may Deceive us ; And we don't know, Whether it is the Spirit, or not ?

Observe what the Apostle saith, in 1 John 5. speaking of the Witness of the Spirit ; (latter part of the 6th Verse) *And the Witness of the Spirit is Truth :* Why does he say, *The Witness of the Spirit is Truth*, but to meet with the Things that are in our Hearts, that we are ready to say : There are other Good Witnesses, we dare not Believe the Spirit alone ; But we have other
Good

Good Witnesses, and we must bring them in; And if they say so too, then we may Believe the Spirit, or else not.

Now the Apostle saith, *The Witness of the Spirit is Truth*; To let us know, there is a separate single Witness of the Spirit of God, that is true.

I know no Reason at all, That we should be afraid to Affirm this; For, If the Spirit of God dwells (as Generally the Best and most Judicious Discourfers of these Things, allow) if the *Spirit of God dwell in us*, Why should it be strange, that the Spirit of God should whisper its Witness in this way? And the Apostle speaks of this very *Witness*, when he saith, *The Witness of the Spirit is True*: But then,

In the Second Place, I do acknowledge this freely and abundantly, That the Spirit of God doth make use of this, or that particular Grace, or Holiness in general, in a Saint of Christ: As he pleases, sometimes he Witnesseth only by himself, sometimes by such and such Graces: And why? Nor because the Graces themselves are alone able to bear up the Witness; That I plainly deny. But then,

The Spirit *Witnesseth* not only of Grace, of Faith, of Repentance, and Holiness, &c. but as they are in Christ; *Faith and Love in Christ Jesus*; And as they are made up of his Righteousness, and flow from his Death, Resurrection and Intercession.

And here is that, that I said to you, Christ takes any Grace of his Servants, and shews it at the Day of Judgment; Not as it is out of himself, but as it is in himself, and in his own Righteousness, and by his Spirit; He now shews to any of his Servants, any of their Graces, but not as out of Christ, but as in Christ, surrounded, made up, fill'd up with his Righteousness: As I remember the Expression in the Book of *Exodus*, where the Jewels that were in the *Urim and Thummim*, in the *Breast-plate* of the *High-Priest*; Their setting is called, *Filling up*.

They were filled up in the Gold, the Receptacles and Lodgings of them were *filled up*, *Exod. 28*. So I say, In every Grace, there's the filling up of the Righteousness of Christ.

Take all the Graces of *Paul*, and of *Peter*, or any of the Servants of Christ; And if they had not been Set in the Righteousness of Christ, if there were not a Filling up by the Righteousness of Christ, they would all come to nought; And therefore they are filled up with his Righteousness.

And

And so I do acknowledge, That it may be; That the Spirit of God may give his Servants a Witness, and a Testimony from their own Graces: And so, in 1 John 4. 17. *Herein (saith he) is our Love made perfect, That we may have Boldness in the Day of Judgment; Because as he is, so are we in this World: There is no Fear in Love, but perfect Love casteth out Fear; He that feareth, is not made perfect in Love.* Here the Apostle speaks of a Tormenting, a Disturbing, and Perplexing Fear: The Power of Love to Christ drives it out; Because as he was, so are we in this World; That is, The more Christ is pleased to Sanctifie his People, (taking it still for a Sanctification in himself) as he is made to us *Wisdom in our Calling, Righteousness in our Justification, Holiness in our Sanctification,* and Eternal Glory, stiled *Redemption*, all in him, and from him.

I shall therefore wind up This, in these two Brief Applications.

The First is, You see here, as Solomon speaks in another Case, *When all is spoken, that can be spoken, We know (saith he) it is but Man*; It is nothing but Man; That is, speaking of the Weakness of Man; All that can be said (saith he) you have nothing but Weak, Frail Man: And, on the other side, (speaking of Christ) There's nothing to be said, but this; *He is All, All in All*, we are nothing: Here's the Sum of the Matter; We are Nothing; all that is in us is Nothing; All that God, or his Spirit hath wrought in us, it is nothing, (if you could take it out of Christ) it will be a *Lamp put out in obscure Darknes*.

Carry this constantly upon your Thoughts; *He that hath the Son, hath Life*; And *he that hath not the Son of God, hath not Life*. We rest upon nothing, when we rest upon our selves: Let us take him in, who is the Great *Melchisedeck*, that *King of Righteousness, that King of Peace*; Let us never go without him, let us never say, Here's such and such a Grace, and such and such a good Action, but let it lead us to the Spring and to the Fountain; If we can but *Chatter*, as *Hezekiah*, the Name of Christ; It is the Blessed Name that is poured forth; It is the *Savour* of the *Knowledge of Christ*, that makes acceptable to God.

If we can but only lie down at the Foot of God and Christ, and earnestly beg for his Sake, according to the Great Expressions of Scripture in Prayer; If we want Quickning, if we want Comfort, if we want Humiliation, if we want the Sense of Sin,
Sorrow

Sorrow for it; I have no Intention in these Discourses, that you should throw these Things away, or think lightly of them; But that you should have them all from the Fountain, and in the Fountain, by a continual Union with him, and Communication from him.

Therefore, if any of us want any of these, the more we should cry to him; If such a Sin grow too hard, and such a Lust and Corruption will take hold upon us and Domineer in our Souls, whether should we go, but to the Great Redeemer? And when we come to have a continual Converse with him, and to have all our Graces from him, and in him, consisting wholly in him, this will bring us to such a Love, such an Acquaintance with him, that it will cast out fear; As those that we continually Converse with, our Love arises far above our Fear, and so, when we Converse thus with Jesus Christ: I beseech you, that you would take the Name of Christ; And if you cannot get your Hearts so affected as you desire, yet let not that Name go, but press it upon your Hearts, in Prayer to God through Christ; I am surely perswaded, the *Flinty Rock* will be turned into a *Standing-Water*: If you say, How? There's no need to give a Man Satisfaction, if a Man slights it, and has no care about this; But if our Souls are indeed and in earnest Affected, as *Bartimeus*, cry more earnestly; And if any thing bids you hold your Peace, yet you'll find that it will be said to you, *He calleth thee*; And so stand up, and lay the Weight and Burden of all upon him, as I said before; *From the Off-spring to the Issue, from Flagons of great Quantity, even to little Cups*, the least Thing in Religion, let all be hung upon this Nail in the sure Place: And then,

The Second Thing; Because I desire still to make mention to you, of the Great and Gladsome Expectation of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus, to come into its Succession; Let us all earnestly beg, That it may be so; And then I am sure, these Things will be cleared, there will be no clashing then: For the Name of Christ will swallow up every thing; The Glory of the Doctrine of Christ, when a Few years are but over, I make no Question, the Name of Christ will sound so loud, that all Things will be drawn up to him, and be united into that Blessed, and Excellent Name of Christ.

And therefore, we will say (with which, I'll conclude this Discourse) *Thy Name is as Oynment poured forth, therefore do the Virgins love Thee, &c.*

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SER-

S E R M O N IX.

On *Matthew 25*. Beginning at the First Verse, but more particularly at the Tenth Verse.

10. *And while they (that is the Foolish Virgins) went to Buy, the Bridegroom came; And they that were Ready, went in with him to the Marriage, and the Door was shut.*

11. *Afterward came also the other Virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.*

12. *But he answered and said; Verily, I say unto you, I know you not.*

I Have past through this Parable; And there remain only Two Points, that I proposed further to Discuss.

And that is,

First, Concerning the Peremptory and Positive Answer, that our Lord gives the *Foolish Virgins*; They cry, *Lord, Lord, open to us*; The Door was shut, while they went to Buy, of which, I have spoken to you before; And when they came, and knocked, to have the Door opened, the Positive and Peremptory Answer, that they received, was this; *Verily, I say unto you, I know you not.* And then,

The *Last* Point is the Application of all; *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the Day, nor the Hour, when the Son of Man cometh.*

I intend, by the Assistance of God, to speak to you of the First of these two Latter Propositions at this time; That is, Concerning the Positive Answer, *I know you not.*

Both the Shortness, and the Irrevocableness, and Irreversableness of it is dreadful; It is in vain any further to make Application; *For, I know you not.* And then,

The Phrase, or the Term in which it is conveyed; It is not in any thing but this; *I know you not.*

So then, the Proposition, or Doctrine, that I shall lay down to you, is this:

The

That it must be fully acknowledged (and every one is to take it to himself,) That a *Virgin*, if a *Foolish Virgin*, shall not be admitted, nor suffered to enter into the Glory of that *Marriage-Feast*, that *Marriage-Supper of the Lamb*.

For that's the Meaning of the *Door being shut*, where a Great Festival-Room is, and where those that are Ushered in as Guests, are Received, and Entertained; *The Door is shut*; And they that have not a Right to Enter, are for ever Debarred; They cannot Enter; *The Door is shut*, and no Entreaty will prevail; Christ Answers them plainly, That *he knows them not*.

Now therefore, I would propose these several Things, to Discourse to you at this Time.

First, I would take notice of our Lord's Language, *I know you not*: And then,

In the Second Place, I would open to you, who these are (by way of Earnest pressing the Consideration upon you) who these are, to whom Christ saith, *I know you not*; Which may very well Startle and Amaze.

In the Third Place, I would Discourse to you, the Reasons, Why *Foolish Virgins* (though *Virgins*) cannot have the *Door opened* to them: And then,

In the Fourth Place, I'll Answer the Scruples, and Objections, that may arise in your Thoughts, against the Great Doctrine of the Gospel, upon this Account: And then,

In the Last Place, I would conclude with the Application of it.

First, Concerning the Phrase that is here used by Christ; And, it is very Remarkable; That whenever Persons that seem to have a Claim, and a Challenge, and a Right to Christ, upon the Account of Profession, and upon the best Profession, as I shall shew you; Whenever they make Approach to Christ, as if he were mistaken, he does not consider who they are that *knock* at the *Door*, and desire him to *open*, yet still, he Represents himself, and Remonstrates to them, in this very Phrase, *I know you not*; And so I shall enter into a Brief Consideration of the Meaning and Importance of it.

First, That it is the Ordinary, or Stated Phrase and Manner of Speaking, that Christ uses: *Matt. 7.* in that Great *Sermon* of Christ upon the Mount, beginning at the 21st. Verse; *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall Enter into the Kingdom*

of Heaven; But he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven: Many will say to me in that Day, Lord, Lord, have we not Prophesied in thy Name? And in thy Name have cast out Devils; And in thy Name done many Wonderful Works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you; Depart from me, ye that work Iniquity: Here's the Language Christ uses.

You pretend (saith he) to know me, to be of my Acquaintance, to have a Familiarity with me, and to have many Pledges of my Presence with you, and of being known to you; But, I know you not; I never knew you.

It is a very Dreadful, and Severe Expression, to those that would claim upon Christ by former Acquaintance; All of you know, it is the Manner among Men, when any one, that we would have nothing to do with; And (as we speak in our Ordinary Language) that we would shake off, when they would desire to lay a fair Challenge, or a Claim to our Acquaintance, or Friendship; We tell them, We don't know them: A Person comes, and would fain Interest himself in us; You know, it is an ordinary thing to say, I don't know you, or I have had very little knowledge of you.

So, to those that say, Lord, Wilt thou Deny us? Have we not Hear'd? Have we not Preach'd? Have we not Eat and Drunk in thy Presence? Have we not Cast out Devils in thy Name? What! Wilt thou shake us off? Wilt thou deny that ever thou knew'st us? Here's the force of the Expression: So, Luke 13. 25. When once the Master of the House is risen up, and hath shut to the Door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the Door, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us; And he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not, whence you are: What! Would you that are Strangers, and that I never had any particular Intimacy with, would you have the Door opened for you?

Then shall ye begin to say, (Ver. 26.) We have Eaten and Drunk in thy Presence, and thou hast taught in our Streets; But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not, whence you are; Depart from me all ye Workers of Iniquity; There shall be Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God, and you your Selves thrust out: So you see, it is the Language of Scripture, the very Language of Scripture, I know you not.

That

That we may understand the Scope and the Meaning of it; I shall open it in Three Particulars, very briefly:

The First is this; There is a *Knowledge of God* from Eternity; A *Knowledge of Eternal Grace*, of *Eternal Love*; A *Fore-Knowledge*, as the Scripture speaks, whom *God hath foreknown*, Rom. 8. A full, and an Excellent Place, to this very Purpose; Whom he did foreknow, (ver. 29.) he also did predestinate to be conformed to the Image of his Son, &c. So there is a *Knowledge of God* from Eternity, of every Person.

I know, this is a very hard thing to *Flesh and Blood* to believe; That God should *Fore-know* some, and not *Fore-know* others; And especially, except they can hang it upon the Condition, That God should foresee, who should Believe, and who should Repent: But as I have formerly endeavoured to clear to you, That there is nothing hard, when it comes to be considered; And that there are more Saints, upon the Account of this *Fore-knowledge of God*, than if he had never *Fore-known* at all: For, there might not have been one Saint, according to *Adam's Behaviour in Paradise*, who had far greater Advantages, and yet you know, he was lost himself, and all his Posterity in him, if a Mediator had not come, and interposed.

Let a Man therefore be set in the best or worst circumstances you can suppose; And, I am sure, there's more particular Hopes from God's *Fore-knowledge* and Purpose, than if there had been no Purpose, or no *Fore-knowledge of God*, 2 Tim. 1. 9. So, Chap. 2, 19. The Foundation of God stands sure: Why does it stand sure? Because (saith he) it hath this very Seal, *The Lord knoweth them that are his*: So saith Christ, *I know my Sheep*. And if we should say, Ay, he knew them, because they were already come into him: Saith he, *I have other Sheep, that I have not yet brought in, and that I must bring in, and them I know too*: So that there is a *Knowledge* before the *Foundation of the World*, or coming in.

And, undoubtedly, though, as you shall see, I shall endeavour to make the Thing as plain, and as free to your Thoughts, as I can, in the Progress of this Discourse; Yet I desire to give Glory to the *Fore-knowledge of God*, and tell you, That it is not your Disadvantage, but its your great Advantage. I durst boldly take any Person in this Assembly, at this Time, and say to him, That there's a great deal more Hopes, that *God hath foreknown you*, than that by your own Strength, you should prevail, for your own

Eternal

Eternal Happiness. There's a Noble Expression in 1 Cor. 8. The Apostle begins thus; *Saith he, We all have Knowledge; Knowledge puffeth up, but Charity edifieth: And if any Man think (saith he) that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know: But if any Man love God, the same is known of him. If any Man comes truly to understand God, then he is known of God first; and if any Man Love God, the same is known and Loved of him first.*

I do not deny, but these Expressions may be taken in the Second and Practical Sense, I shall next give you; But I look upon it, That the Apostle first goes up to the Fountain of Knowledge, to that Spring of All-saving Knowledge, God's *Knowing Men*, in his Eternal Love, in and through Jesus Christ.

The Second *Knowing* of Men therefore is that, which Men will more easily assent to, and take down; And that is, When we are in the Ways of Love, and Service, and Obedience to God, then he knows with Approbation, he knows with Delight; God knows every one of us now, we are all well known to him, and all our Ways, and our Thoughts and Actions are all known to him; He knows us a great deal better than we know our selves: As he speaks, *Amos 4. last, He declareth unto Man what is his Thought: As if he should say, Would you have me Ignorant of your Thoughts, and that you must tell them me, or else I cannot know them? No, He declareth unto Man what is his Thought: He unriddles all our Thoughts, and Purposes, and Intentions in us; And so he knows us, every one very well: As it is said, John 2. 25. He needed not that any should testify of Man; For he knew what was in Man; He knoweth our Thoughts afar off.*

But now, this is a *Knowing* (as Scripture speaks) *afar off*, in another Sense: He knows our Thoughts, long before we conceive them; He *tells* to Man his Thoughts, that hereafter will arise up, and how they will rise up: As it is said in the Prophet *Ezekiel*, concerning Gog and Magog; *Thoughts shall come up in thee. I tell thee, long before thou camest into Being; God knows our Thoughts, at the uttermost Distance: But he knows with Approbation, all those that are his; And, therefore that may be the Sense of the Form and Expression, of being known of God: If any Man Love God, he is known of him: If any Man be in the Way of Holiness, and Righteousness, God knows him; He knows him with great Approbation; For so Knowledge, in Scripture,*

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Scripture does several times speak, *Psal. 1. 6. For the Lord knoweth the Way of the Righteous; But the Way of the Ungodly shall Perish.*

The Lord knoweth; That is, He takes delight to Contemplate, as Men desire to know a Thing, they like, and Love, they search in-to it, by Study, Meditation, and Contemplation; *The Lord knoweth the Way of the Righteous;* He knoweth it so, as to delight in it: *Thou most upright, dost weigh the Path of the Just;* As it is said, *Isa. 26:*

A Third Way of *Knowing* is, The acknowledging of Persons, at the Day of the *Marriage-Feast*; He knows them, that is, he will *confess them*: As Christ saith, *Whosoever denieth me before Men, him will I deny; I will not know him*: And *I will confess his Name*: If any Man takes care to watch, and to keep his Garments, and not to defile them, saith Christ, *I will know that Person; I will Confess him*, I will not Disown him; I will not say, *I do not know him*, but I will acknowledge him at that time, *Rev. 3. 5. He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in White Raiment;* And, *I will not blot out his Name out of the Book of Life*, but *I will confess his Name before my Father, and before his Angels.*

And therefore here we may find, why Christ useth this Expression, *I know you not*; Because the Persons that were lost, they were not *known* to God, in his Eternal Love, and Grace, from Everlasting; And They were never approved by Christ, even in their very professing him.

And Lastly, Christ is ashamed to own such Acquaintance, when they say to him, Lord, Have we not been often with Thee, in thy House, in thy Ordinances, in Prayer, and Preaching, and Hearing, and in the Lord's Supper, and in all the Duties of thy Worship? Lord, *Do'st thou not know us?* Can'st thou not Remember we were at such and such a Time Hearing, and Receiving the Lord's Supper, and Praying unto Thee? Can'st thou not Remember this? And Christ is ashamed, that ever it was so, That we not having departed from Iniquity, that we could ever make a Pretence to him; That we could ever say, That he had any thing to do with us, or we with him: And so I have dispatcht the First Particular, to open to you the Sense of these Words, *I know you not.*

I come to the Second, And that is, of the Persons, of whom it is said, *I never knew you, I know you not*; They are *Virgins*, tho *foolish*,
And

And certainly, it speaks the highest Reach that any one can make without True Grace, that is spoken of here : This must be said, and acknowledged, though I confess, it is one of the Dreadfullest Things that I know in Scripture, and the most Discouraging, as it may seem, in the Ways of Religion ; That Christ should say of Persons that have been *Virgins*, That he doth not *know* that there hath been such a particular Acquaintance, and (as it were) Endearment between Christ and them ; They owned themselves to him, and to be his ; And yet for all that, he should say, *I know you not*.

They are the highest Attainers in Christianity, and in the Profession of God, in Natural, or in Revealed Religion, and yet Christ says, *I know you not* : I'll give you a little clearing of this to you, a Lustre of this Truth upon your Minds, in very great briefness.

First therefore, I would consider Persons that are Profane and Wicked, and that live loosely, under the whole Heavens, Let their Religion be what it will, They that are Cruel and Unjust, and Unmerciful ; They that are Intemperate and Sensual, and Debauched ; They that are Profane, and Contemners of God, according to the Light, that they have, let it be what it will, it is no wonder, that Christ should say to them, *I know you not, I never knew any of you* ; You by your Profession of the Name, (called *Mahometanism*, or by the Name of this or that *Paganism*) What have I to do with you ? As God saith to his People, *You have I known above all the Families of the Earth*, &c. As if God should say, I do not know the *Heathen*, or *Pagan*, or obstinate *Jew* ; Because he never came into the Profession of my Name : But now, one would think the Name of *Christian* should Envelop, should gather all within Salvation and Happiness, that they that Name the Name of *Jesus Christ*, as a Saviour and Redeemer, and Call upon it, should be *Saved*.

But yet even among *Christians* there are such kind of Persons as are Blasphemers, Common Swearers, Common Drunkards, Common Impure Persons, Covetous, Extortioners, Unmerciful, Unjust, Idolaters ; And of these it is no wonder Christ should say to such, *I know you not* : Even Natural Conscience will Justifie Christ in that, in saying, *I know you not*.

But it seems hard, when Persons professing the Name of Christ, Sober, that had lived better than others. when they have not an
Acknow-

Acknowledgment and owning from Jesus Christ: And therefore it is worthy our Consideration, that we read of, *Matth. 19.* of the *young Man* that had *done every thing*; when the Commandments were reckoned up and repeated to him, saith he, *All these have I kept from my youth.* He was so sober a man, so just a liver, *what lack I yet?* says he: Here was a plain; good Liver, a man of a good Life: You know it is very much spoken of, *a Good Life, a Good Life.* And, it is true, it ought to be required, and every one ought to mind this of himself; nothing can be spoken in derogation or diminution to it, in it self; And yet, this *young man*, that had kept all this, and was so good, that Christ *looked upon him, and loved him*; He saw a great amiableness and loveliness in his Person and Deportment; And yet for all this, Christ intimates very severely; he animadverts, and makes very harsh notes upon this Person; when Christ proposes *to sell all, he went away sorrowful.* And Christ makes this sharp Remark upon him; *With great difficulty such men shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; Verily, I say unto you, it is hardly possible, that a rich man should enter into the Kingdom of Heaven;* Nay, though he be such a *good Liver.* If a man that is look'd upon as a Religious Man, and that makes a great Figure in the World, and that God hath blest; Now this Man living so sober, in regard of all the Commandments in outward acts (*all these commandments have I kept from my youth up.*) One would think, it were not possible, that such a Man should not go to Heaven: And yet, saith Christ, *Verily, I say unto you, with relation to this lovely young man, it is a hard thing for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* Certainly he did not come up to that, was properly the *Virgin*-state in the acknowledgment of Christ, however he was of unspotted, unblameable external conversation; he had too, an acknowledgment of Christ as a very Excelling man and a Great Master of Divine Knowledg; but He had not a Sense of his Divine Glory, nor the very power of Christianity so as to Grasp the Inside of it, to Lay Hold upon the very Spirit and Life of it, as in Christ, and so to divest Himself of every thing for Christ, if Called to it; Nay he was unwilling to Own, and Follow Christ, in the very Outward Profession and herein he came short of the *Foolish Virgins*, who yet Fall short of Heaven; and therefore Christ preaches upon him this General Doctrine; *How Hard is it for a Rich man to Enter into the Kingdom of Heaven!*

In the Third place, I might Name to you the men of *Tradition*, the men of *Superstition*; that look upon it as their *Glory*, and *Security* for *Heaven*, to add many things to the *Commands* of *God*, and of *Christ*, as if they either exceeded, or made more perfect, or more beautiful, decent and honourable, the *Religion* of *Divine Institution*, by their own super-added observations; but this needs not to be much insisted upon; because *Christ* hath declared from the *Word of God* in the *Old Testament* by the *Prophet Esay*, *This People draw nigh to me with their Lips, but their hearts are far from me; But in vain do they worship me, teaching for Doctrines the commandments of men*, *Matth. 15, &c.* But now, these *Virgins*, as they hold the *Truth*, so the *purity* of the *Worship* of the *Gospel*; and were also of an *unblameable outward Conversation*, as was before opened concerning the *Virgin State*: From all this, we may plainly perceive, it is a very nice Case, to distinguish either in *Doctrine* or in *Practice*, between *Virginity* enlivened, with *Wisdom*; and *Virginity*, that hath the *dead Fly of Folly* in it.

I come therefore to the *Third Head of Discourse*, to give you the *Reasons* of this, even *Tremendous Dispensation* of *God*; *That there should be Virgins, and yet Foolish Virgins*: For to speak the very bottom and foundation of the matter: This *Resemblance* of our *Lords*, of the *Case* of *Souls* or *Spirits* not accepted by *Christ*, compared with the *Apostles Expression*, of *presenting them as chaste Virgins to Christ*; and yet that some *Virgins* presented to him, he *charges*, according to those expressions in *Job*, *with folly*; It seems to carry an *Allusion* in a *spiritual sence*, to that *Case*, *Dent. 24. 1, &c.* Those that are espoused as *Virgins* to *Christ*, and yet they are *not clean in his sight*, they are for ever, eternally separated from him, even *divorced* from him; He sends them a *Renunciation*, a *Bill of Divorcement* from himself; This is dreadfully stupendious.

These Two Accounts I would give hereof according to *Scripture*, why there is such a severity of the *Gospel* towards those, who are *Virgins*, and are found *foolish Virgins*.

1. Our Lord *Jesus Christ* would hereby Remonstrate to us the great *Corruption* and *Depravation* of *Human Nature*; we do not enough apprehend, what a *Nature*, and what *Hearts* thereupon we carry about us; *Hearts deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked, who can know them!* It is strange, so excellent, so

So pure a thing as a *Virgin State* should be defiled, and made wholly unacceptable to Christ by *Folly*; our Lord therefore, hereby calls upon us, to be aware what Natures and Hearts we bear about with us; since that very time, that God made Man Upright in Knowledge, Wisdom, Righteousness and true Holiness, and he defiled his Nature with the folly of many inventions; The Nature of Man Taints, and defiles every thing, even *Virginity* it self; though not by a false Religion; a false Worship, or grossly polluted Conversation, yet by the folly of insincerity, and want of the Treasure of Grace standing in Union to Christ: This should carry us to fear our own Hearts, *Blessed is the Man that feareth always, but he that trusteth in his own heart is a Fool*; he deceiveth himself, as the Apostle James saith; *Many ways seem right enough in our own Eyes, but the issue and end thereof is death.* Let us therefore, as the Apostle Peter warns, *Pass the time of our sojourning here in fear*; and as the Apostle Paul saith, *be jealous over our selves*, least while we think, we present our selves as chaste Virgins to Christ, that we are Espoused to him, there should be any corruption from the simplicity that is in Christ Jesus. Christ is one most single, simple Jesus, without Multiplicity; as in Doctrine and Worship, so in our Union to him, whoever misses him in that uncompounded Faith, and undivided Affection, defiles the *Virgin-State*, and looses the Glory and Purity of it: You may be *Virgins* as to the Chastity of Profession, and outward Conversation; and yet you may loose the Wisdom of *Virginity*; if there be not a singleness of Eye and Heart to Christ, which cannot be but in Union to himself; from thence arises the simplicity that is in Christ, and our conformity to it.

A Second Reason, why so severe and dreadful a Dispensation is offered to you in this Parable, that I shall now give you is, That we might learn Three great Lessons from it; it is not to discourage, or beat you off from your Profession, but that you may bow down your Ears and Hearts to these three things.

1. That you may depend upon the Free Grace of Electing Love; every one ought to humble himself, and to lie in the Dust before God in the sence of this, *It is not of him that willeth, or of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth Mercy: And who art thou, Oh Man! that repliest against God:* All this speaks the necessity of lying low before God, in the sence of this supreme Grace. And what can tend more thus to humble us, than to con-

sider, *Virgins* may be *Virgins*, and yet *Foolish Virgins*! This should make us look to a Love and Grace above and beyond any thing in our selves, or that is wrought in our selves; we should keep our Eye on this: The Apostle after the Description of the *Antichristian Apostacy*, retires to Election; *God hath chosen us to Salvation*: This is not to draw off our minds from any of those Graces, that are the fruits of Election, but to carry up our Minds above them, to the Fountain of them: And there is no greater assurance of the Truth of Grace, than to look up to Electing Grace; *Knowing Brethren, your Election of God, and giving diligence in every Grace, to make our Calling and Election sure*: The Apostle hath given us a great Admonition for Adoring Supream Grace, *Rom. 11. 32, &c. God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all*: (That is, upon all that he will have mercy upon: He hath shut them up in such a way, that they could not stir, if his Grace did not open the way.) O the depth of the Riches, both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the Mind of the Lord, or who hath been his Counsellor? Who could direct God what he should do in the eternal concernments of Souls? Or, *Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompenced unto him again*? Can any say to God, Thou hast done unjustly or unrighteously, that thou hast not chosen me? Why, what hast thou done, or any Creature done to oblige him? If he hath, I dare assure him, it shall be recompenced to him to the uttermost. But I assure him, he that replies thus, he is a *Bold Man*: and *Proud and Haughty, is his Name*. And, as Christ saith, *Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to Babes*. For of him, and through him, and to him are all things; to whom be Glory for ever. And therefore I desire to be among the number of those, that do not quarrel with God; That dare not enter a contest, and a contention with him, concerning his Eternal Choice; Let us humble our selves, every one at his foot, and say, *Of thee, and through thee, and to thee are all things*, and I desire to be to thy Glory. Thus let us make our selves nothing before God, nothing at all, but make him all. We never did any thing for him, we could never lay an Obligation, and therefore, we have nothing to say, but *Free Grace, Free Grace; Free Love, and Free foreknowledge of God*.

2. In the Second Place, This Parable in this dreadful part teaches, That we should all be beholding to Christ, and to the Free Grace that is in him, the Pardon of Sin, the Righteousness of Christ, his Blood, and his Redemption: Here's our all, I say, here is our all. For, as I opened to you, the Great Point is, Whether in Christ or not? Whether Christ be in us, and whether we are in him? Whether we are *found in him*, as the Apostle speaks, *Phil. 3. 7, &c.* Here's the Point, That every one may depend upon the *Righteousness of God in Christ*. It is not the *works that we have done*; but according to his own mercy he saved us, by the *washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit*. And here the *wise Virgins* reached out themselves to be found in Christ, and *only in him*; but the *Foolish Virgins* fell short here.

3. Thirdly, We can do nothing but by the Spirit of Christ. Our only hope is in the *Spirit of the Lord our God*; And therefore the *foolish Virgins* were mistaken, That they did all in their own strength and power: They trusted in their own Beauty; they trusted in their own *Virginity*, and did not mind the *Righteousness of Christ*, the Free Grace of God, and the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

I come to the *Fourth* thing I proposed, and that is, To answer the *Objections* that may be made against this state of this Case I have given you; And, I desire to speak plainly, yet in very short to you, in this matter: You may say then, *What can any one do? What hope can there be? Though I am in the True Religion, and in the True Worship of God; and though I am in an unblameable Conversation, and yet I may be lost and undone, because I have not Wisdom, because I have not something that I am not able to apprehend, or to be sensible of.*

Now therefore, I'll satisfy you in this; because you may think, In all Religion, there lies a discouragement upon us, If things be thus; Therefore I'll Answer you in Two things, very briefly.

First, Let no man mistake, for I am sure, Let any thing be preached that can be preached, yet there shall not so much as be one Moral Person fewer in the World: I am sure, that the measure of Restraining Grace, of Preventing Grace, of Morallizing Grace, that God will give to the World, nothing of Discourse, or Opinion shall be able to straiten it, or to lessen it. I say, I am sure of this; There shall not be one Honest Man in the World less, because Christ preached to that *young Man* that had kept all the

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the Commandments from his youth; Thou art yet under a great difficulty, as to the Kingdom of Heaven. A man might have taken the Advantage of that discourse of Christ with this young man, and have made a Clamour, and noise of it, and said, here's one that despises, and discourages a good young man: for he saith, How hardly shall such a young man, that hath kept all the Commands from his youth, enter into the Kingdom of Heaven? but Christ knew very well, that he should not hinder, or lessen, or straiten Moral Honesty, or Goodness in the World by what he said; for he knew all these things are in God, and from God; and there shall not one hair from the head of Morality (as I may so speak) Fall to the Ground, because of any thing that can be said; for, There is a Common Grace of Morality and Honesty given out from God, and Christ, and whomsoever he thinks fit to Receive it, They shall receive it, and must receive it, and they shall be under the power of it, and live suitably to it: And so for the Grace of God, There shall no one be hindered of his Grace; Let men have as many Conceptions, as they can have of things, and however Discouraging; if his Truth be duely spoken and in the season; Therefore dont think, that the preaching of the Truth of Scripture can do any hurt: for, God is allwayes present, breathing in the Word, both with a Spirit of Morality, and common Gifts of Righteousness, and also with a Spirit of Grace; and none shall be ever able to straighten his Spirit, in any of the Effects of it: And the Truths of God spoken according to his Word shall be subordinated to it.

In the Second Place; I do always acknowledge and Declare, with Greatest Freedom, and Sincerity, That this is the onely way of Preaching the Gospel; To preach it so, that Every one should be Sensible of True Holiness and True Grace; And yet withal, They must be Sensible of Free Grace, the free Grace of God, the free Choice of God: Free Grace in the Righteousness of Christ, of the Spirit Blowing where it listeth, and where it pleaseth, as our Lord tells us. These things are not to be Divided nor Justled out one by another; for they both stand fair in the Wisdom of God; and they are both to be offered to the Minds and Consciences of men; and they shall both work Effectually for the great ends and purposes, that God hath appointed: And, as (as Christ saith) If any one be offended, let them be offended; Why? Because, every Plant which my Heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be

be rooted up. That is, there shall be no Plant lost, but what God leaves to it self, in his just and righteous Judgment; That is, A Moral Man, and an Honest Man, and a Sober Man, so by the Grace of God, he shall be so still; God hath chosen and mark'd him out, to be such a one. And he that is truly good, he shall be so. And yet, all this shall be conveyed in the power of Preaching, and in such kind of Threatnings and Promises, such kind of Expostulations, as Scriptures speak; and therefore, I would not have you think, that these things should be put to a Jarre by any Mens Preaching; for every one is under the righteous Government of God: Now therefore, let Truths run ever, according to the Word of God, let them run freely, as a stream from Free Grace; Let them then, be with all the Freeness and Publickness spoken of, that can be.

And, as it is said in *Exodus 14.* There was a *Pillar of Cloud*, and a *Pillar of Fire*, in one; And the *Pillar of Cloud* was turned, that is, the *dark side* was turned upon the *Egyptians*, and the light side upon the *Israelites*; So I say, when the Word of God is preached, the *Light side* shall be upon the person that God will have a sober, honest, righteous, good man; and the *dark side* shall be upon the dissolute, and upon the prophane, and upon the intemperate; And so the *dark side* shall be upon them, that God leaves to themselves, and the *Light side* shall be upon those, that God will bring under his Grace, and under his Spirit, and under the Power of Holiness.

And so I have Discourfed the Doctrinal part of this great Point to you; and I hope, so, That none of you should have any just cause of being offended, at what I have spoken; but that it should engage every one of us to run up to Grace, and to Christ; for the hopes are greater that I have laid down to you out of the Scriptures, wherein our Springs lie then when they call upon us for our own Action and Duty; And when they do so, they shew us the great necessity of Christ, of the Spirit of Christ, of Free Grace. For, don't we see, Men are Preaching up Free-Will and Works as much as they can? And yet for all that, was there ever so much prophaneness and wickedness, was there ever any less Power and Life of the Gospel, since the *Reformation* than now there is? And therefore, though the Pulpits be full of this, yet we don't see the powerful Grace of God go along so, that we have reason to rejoice at such Preaching; but those that

Preach.

Preach the Righteousness of Christ without Works, and set forth the fulness of Free Grace, and of the Supreme Dominion of God, and yet in a way of Holiness, I can remember and trace back, That there were great effects of this; Mens Lives were mightily Changed and Reformed; They were mightily changed, notwithstanding that this Preaching was endeavoured to be stifled and stopt; There were many effects, both in City and Country, in bringing Men to God and to Christ, by that Preaching, and so there are still; and therefore to close all in the Application.

1. In the *First Place*; I would earnestly beseech you, That you would prize this Grace: And Oh! that God would be pleased to turn the *Bright-side* of what I have now spoken on, and that you would go into your secret Closets and Meditations, and lay your selves low before God, and acknowledge the freeness of God's Grace; *One have I chosen, and another have I left*: Be not afraid of this, I say, it shall do you no hurt at all; God may make it a time of Love; And the more you depend upon Grace, upon the Righteousness of Christ, the more holiness; and the more you shall find the Power and Breathing of the Spirit of Jesus Christ upon you. And therefore, Remember the Three things whereupon we stand, viz.

The Free Grace of God, before the Foundation of the World.

The Righteousness of Jesus Christ, our whole Trust, as to our acceptance with God.

The Spirit of Grace in building up in the ways of Holiness: And

2. In the *Second Place*, Let not (from all that I have spoken) any think, That any thing will be accepted, without sincerity of Grace. For, where-ever there hath been the Love of God, or the Righteousness of Christ, that hath taken hold of any ones State and Condition; and where the Spirit of God hath taken hold upon any ones heart, there shall be sure to be the mighty Effect of Grace, and Holiness and Spirituality; and, that in a Man's own action, he shan't lie still, and say, *I'll see what God will work upon me*, but he shall be *up and be doing*, because the Lord is with him: He shall be active and full of motion, striving, and full of industry; because the *Light-Side* of the Scripture is upon him, and he is kept from every thing that offends; His *foot shall not be taken* (as Scripture saith) while he holds himself close, in dependance upon Free Grace, upon the free Choice and

and Election of Grace: I am sure, you shall not be ashamed, if God move your hearts, and if the *Light-Side* of Scripture be upon you in these things; you shall find God will be your Confidence, and your sure and *strong hold*; his Name in these things shall be *your strong Tower*, to which ye shall *run and be safe*.

In the *Third Place*, I desire you would give me but one Moments time, to move you to beg for the Coming of the *Kingdom of Jesus Christ*; and for the Time, it shall first be preparing for its Glory; and which I have declared to be so near, upon so great Ground of Scripture.

Now, I would give you Ground of earnestly begging for this *Kingdom of Christ*, and the succession of it; And why? Because there shall be great Converting Grace, bringing in Strangers to God and to Christ; There shall be a greater Power in bringing men to the Purity and Simplicity that is in Christ: Then many *foolish Virgins* yet, shall be made *wise*; many not *Virgins* yet, shall be Espoused to Christ: And, if you say, Why was not this always? The Answer that I shall give you is this:

It is in the power of God to dispence Grace as he pleases: You may as well say, Why had not our fore-Fathers the Gospel, as pure as we have? Why had they not the Scripture so clear? And why had they it not in their own Language, Two or Three, or Four or Five Hundred Years ago? It was a dangerous thing within these Two Hundred Years, to have the *Bible in English*, or the *New Testament* in their Houses: Then it was a certain sign, That that Man was in danger of his Life, to have it so. Why did not God give it with that freedom, as we have it? And then, if you look back to Sixteen Hundred Years ago, there was nothing in the World at large, but *Idols*, and *servings of Devils*: And the Gospel was not Preached: Till after the Apostles Times, it did not come into these Islands of *Britain*. It is not for us to know how to Rule and to Govern *Times and Seasons*; But God hath disposed of every thing; *Blessed are your Eyes, for you see, and your Ears, for they hear*. But I would but only give you one or two Scriptures, of the great advantage, if we should but live to see the Kingdom of Jesus Christ: And therefore, I beseech you all, That you would earnestly pray, That that Kingdom may be coming forth. In the 29th of *Isaiah*, if you observe the reading at the 15th Verse, you shall find, that there was a *Book* offered, and the Learned said, *it was sealed*; and therefore, say they, *How can*

we read it? And the unlearned said, we cannot read it, for we are not learned: If learned Men cannot read it, how should we read it? But saith God, in the following part of the Chapter, This very Book shall be opened, it shall come to pass in that day (that is, when the Kingdom of Christ shall come) The deaf shall hear the words of the Book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness; that is, There shall be so mighty a change of things, that that Book that the learned and the unlearned could not meddle with, the very deaf shall hear the Words of this Book: It is a very wonderful Scripture to this purpose, it shews us plainly the great things, that shall be done by God at that Day: And I make no doubt, but that these Scriptures, that Men are afraid that any should meddle with, and they think it Presumption; And how should we meddle with such hard Scriptures? I make no doubt, but the Eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of darkness. And so Isa. 35. 8. And an high way shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those. The way-faring men, though fools, shall not err in that way; So great a Light of the Gospel shall shine out. Pray, therefore, don't be so against the Preaching of the Kingdom of Christ, in your Judgments, or in your Discourses; but rather bow your Knees, and buckle your hearts, and your thoughts down to the very lowest at the Throne of Grace, to desire, that this Kingdom may come. Why do you envy one another the great Happiness that shall be in the Kingdom of Christ? For, a great Offspring, like the Drops of Dew from the Womb of the Morning, must at that time be brought home to Christ: And many of those that are Virgins but in Form must come to have it in the Truth and Reality, and Sincerity of it. And therefore, let us earnestly pray, according to that Prayer, stiled the Lords Prayer; Let us with earnestness and understanding, pray, Thy Kingdom, O Lord, let it come, &c.

S E R M O N X.

On Matth. 25. 13. *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the Day, nor the Hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.*

I Come now to the Use, or (as we speak) Application, which our Lord makes of this Great and Excellent Parable, *Watch,*
for

for you know neither the day nor the hour, in which the Son of Man cometh: And it may be, upon the hearing of the Words, you may be ready to say, That I am upon a Scripture that overthrows the Attempts of drawing such a Scripture Line of Time, as I have endeavoured to hold out, and to perswade the Truth of, as should lead to the very Coming of the Bridegroom, the great Son of Man. But indeed, the intention of it, as I shall shew you, is quite another thing, and does not concern it self in that matter, either one way or other: The main Point in it is that great practical one, That every one of us ought to be upon our Guard, upon our Watch, while we are here in the World, in relation to that great Appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ: We are to wait all our days according to our opportunity of enjoying the Gospel, in the compass of Time God gives us, which may, as you know, be longer, or shorter, as our Lives are in the dispose of God; he may take us away this very Night, if he pleases; and yet for all this, we must have made such a provision, and preparation for the Coming of the Bridegroom; which will else be with a dreadful and ruinous surprise upon us whensoever it be: We are infinitely obliged (give me leave to use so great a Word, in so great a Point) we are, I say, infinitely obliged therefore, to take heed in so great a matter; If it was as many Years to the Coming of Christ, as it hath been since he spake these Words, and though we were sure it would be so: That therefore, which I will propose to open to you, shall be summ'd in this main Doctrine:

Doct. *Everyone that hears the Word of the Gospel, concerning the Coming and Kingdom of Christ (take it in your own sense as much as you please) is bound to watch, as if it might be the very next Day and Hour; yea though he had lived in the days of Christ, and had then known certainly, that that Coming and Kingdom, should not have been in so many Ages as have run out since.*

For the knowing what Day, or Hour, is not a knowing, or not knowing by Computation, or Account of Time; but by an effectual providing a Treasure of Oil, that we may not be found foolish Virgins at that day. Our watchful knowing is knowing by Union to the great Son of Oil, Christ himself: And if any Man did know never so certainly, the precise time of the Coming of the Bridegroom, yet he would not know, in our Lord's sence, at what hour he'll come, but would be in the same surprise, as if he knew nothing at all: That Day most certainly comes unawares, upon all over-

charged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and Cares of this Life; upon all that sleep, and are not watchful by Faith and Holiness; It comes at a day when it is not looked for, and at an hour the evil servant is not aware, who eats and drinks with the drunken; They only know that day, whose Loins are girded, and whose Lights are burning, who, when their Lord cometh, upon account of the Wedding, open to him immediately; Blessed are those servants, whom their Lord when he cometh, shall find so doing; Verily, saith Christ, he will gird himself, and will make them sit down to Meat, and will serve them; be ye therefore ready; for the Son of Man cometh at an hour ye think not; that is, if you are not ready; For the very sence of knowing, or not knowing the time, is being ready or not ready; if not ready, we are not aware. The knowing of time, or not knowing, is but the cover and outside of this true, effective knowing, or not so knowing.

I will therefore, first endeavour to open to you the true state of this thing, and then lay down to you several particular Directions for the right Exercise of this Watch: And in a Second Head, give you the Arguments of Persuasion to this Watch, and so close the whole with Application.

1. To shew you then in the First Place, the true sence of this great Proposition, from this our Lord's Application of the Parable: And in the general, You know the Conclusion of a Discourse is the Practical Application; and that you know, is regularly drawn out of the main substance of it: This Application is then drawn out of the substance of the Parable; and that most evidently, is the having Oil in our Vessels, as hath been explain'd: The watching is therefore, our looking well to that, having Oil in our Vessels; for they watch'd, who were so ready, though the Bridegroom delaying his coming, they slumbred, and lay down in Death; they did not watch, who so slumbred, and went out of the World by Death, that they had not a provision ready for the Bridegrooms Coming; so that the knowing or not knowing the Time, is not at all touched upon; But more particularly, to attain our Lord's sence in the most plain and practical instances of a Spiritual Life, according to the Gospel, as Directions to watching.

1. Look diligently, that we are taken out of the Gall of Bitterness, and from under the Bond of Iniquity, That we are taken out of the state of Children of Wrath, by being implanted into Christ, and

and translated into the Kingdom of his dear Son, in whom is Redemption in his Blood, even the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his Grace; that we awake from that sleep, and stand up from the dead, that Christ may give us life: Let us look well, that we are brought into the State of Grace; for that is the principal and fundamental Point of *Watching*, and the Essential Difference between a wise and a foolish Virgin; to be brought into Christ; and to have his Spirit.

2. Let us be continually earnest, and fervent in Prayer; watch unto Prayer, as the Apostle Peter speaks, 1 Pet. 4. 7. And as our Lord commands, Watch and pray, that you may be accounted worthy to escape all these things, and to stand before the Son of Man at his Coming, Luke 21. 36. Pray earnestly with importunate Crys, that you may not be given over, and found in a state of Ruine and Condemnation at that Great Day. Christ was whole Nights in Prayer; with strong Crys and Tears, he offered up Supplications unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; And how then should we think to meet him without that exercise; let us therefore be instant in Prayer.

3. Let us be very diligent in meditating on the Word of God, Blessed is the Man that meditates in his Law day and night; that's *watching*, to meditate day and night; and whereas Christ says, *Know you not*, it is said, The Lord knows the way of such holy, righteous servants of his, through his Grace in Christ: And it is an evidence of being in him, Psal. 1. 6.

4. Let us shew our *watching*, by keeping our selves from our iniquity, and from all the Temptations to it; Watch and pray, (saith our Lord) that ye enter not into Temptation, Luke 22. 43. Be sober (saith the Apostle Peter) and watch unto Prayer; Gird up the loins of your mind, and hope perfectly, for the glory that shall be brought to you at the Revelation of Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. 1. 13. with c. 4. 7. And be sober, be vigilant, or watchful, for your Adversary the Devil, goeth about like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour, c. 5. 2. All this shews the great Watchfulness our Souls should maintain against our own Iniquity, that we may be upright before him, and not be as foolish Virgins. And it is the more admonishing, that in like Discourses of our Lords with this Parable, when he discovers such foolish Virgins, he says, Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

5. Our Watchfulness must be exercis'd in adding Grace to Grace;

Grace; for otherwise, as the Apostle saith, we shall be *blind*, and not see so *afar off*, as to behold the *King in his beauty*, and the *Land that is very far off*, 2 Pet. 1. 9, &c. with Isa. 33. 17. Thus an abundant and rich Entrance shall be *ministred unto us*, into the *Everlasting Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ*; We shall be ready, and not go to buy, and find the Door shut.

6. We Watch by continual Meditation upon being *dissolved*, and being with Christ, and upon the *Glory of his Coming*; We need not be written to of the *Times and Seasons*, for we our selves shall know, that the *Day of God so cometh as a Thief in the night*; and as *sudden destruction cometh on them that say Peace, Peace*; but they that watch thus, and are sober, are not in *darkness*, and in the *night*; but are of the *Day*, and not *asleep*, 1 Thes. 5. 5. &c.

7. We must Watch against the Sin of the very Age and Day wherein we live; when we live in a prophane Age, take heed of that; when you live in a formal, hypocritical time, take heed of having a Name to live, and being dead; for Christ comes on such as a Thief, at unawares. They shall not know, at what time he will come upon them, Rev. 3. 3. If a Sensual, Luxurious, Worldly Age; Take heed of being overcharged with those evils, and the Cares of this Life.

8. Let us possess our selves with the most clear and distinct Apprehensions of the *Appearances of the Kingdom of Christ*, as the Kingdom of the Resurrection, and of the *Appearances of Saints in Bodies of Light and Glory*, Rev. 16. 15. Behold I come as a Thief, Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his Garments, that is, that looketh to the *presenting his Body now, as a sacrifice, a living and acceptable sacrifice well pleasing to God in Christ*, Rom. 12. Thus we shall appear in *Bodies of Glory*, and not of Contempt; in the *Redemption of our Bodies*, and Men cannot see our shame when Christ cometh, and all his Saints with him.

Head 2. I come therefore to the *Second Head*, to lay down the Arguments of Perswasion, that we may be moved to this watch.

Argument 1. The Time of Watch is only the Time of the present Life: Whatever we would do for the *After State*, it is to be done in the *Present State*, in the Time of the *present Life*; There is no Counsel nor Device in the Grave whither we are going; and therefore, whatever Our Hands find to do, for that *After-State*, let us do it now; For in dying, Spirits going out of Bodies enter into their Determinative State; They enter in the State they were in

in here; They carry out the Oil, they have, whether only in the Lamp of their Profession, or in the Vessel, the Heart united to Christ the Fountain; And so they must abide, so they must appear, when the *Bridegroom cometh*; This is the holy and wise Decree of God, concerning the Human Spirit, and who dare controll it.

From hence then it necessarily follows, That this *Watching* is to be maintained in this Present State; and that, it can be only here; and that therefore, it is only in order to and with relation to the *Coming of the Bridegroom*, but not with relation to the Time of his *Coming*; for then the Doctrine of *Watching* had not been proper to Persons living so many Ages before it; but because every person successively living since the Time our Lord spake these words, is in the Time of his Life to exercise this *Watch*; that is, to see he hath the Oil in his *Vessel*, and not in his *Lamp* only, that he may stand before the Son of Man at his *Coming*; Therefore it is a Doctrine necessary to every Age, as well those furthest off, as those nearest to his *Coming*; because every one hath but a Life-Time to *Watch* in; and he is much more to be wrought upon by the fence of the shortness and uncertainty of his own Life, than by the nearness of the *Bridegrooms Coming*, and the uncertainty of the time of that, as we plainly see by every Days Experience: And this is much the more uncontestable, by observing the Apostle Paul's earnestness, against the Christians of those Times, thinking the Day of Christ was then at hand, which he solemnly affirms, could not be, till an *Apostacy* of 1260 Days of Years should have come in (and that not immediately neither) and have run out; Yea, our very Lord himself, when They thought the Kingdom of God should immediately have appeared, Luke 19. 11, &c. gives the Parable of a Nobleman going into a far Country, and returning; importing a distance of Time; all which had been a contradiction to *watching*, because we know not the day nor hour; if the meaning had not been a making provision in the present Life for the *Bridegrooms Coming*, how many Ages after soever it should be; and that else, it would come upon us at unawares, and on the sudden, and find us unready, unprovided for it.

Argument 2. It further appears, That *Watching* is the making such provision in this present Time for the *Bridegrooms Coming*, as will bear up to the Glory of that Time; because in the same State wherein we lie down, we shall rise at that day, whenever it be,

be, and openly appear therein in the face of Heaven and Earth.

The Judgment of Spirits, though it be before God and Christ, and Angels, and Saints; yet Scripture speaks of it as of a private Judgment; for the Day of the Appearance of Christ is spoken of, *Rom. 2. 5.* as the *Revelation* or uncovering that *righteous Judgment of God*; which as pass'd upon *Spirits returning to God that gave them*; is as covered and secret; There is greatest reason to be assured, That when Spirits of Saints come into the hand of Christ, there is *joy in Heaven*; for if there be joy at their Conversion in the *presence of the Angels of God*, and so of Saints, there is much more so in the coming of Spirits to Glory; but this Joy, and the Shouts of it are not heard down on Earth; But at that Appearance of Christ, they are presented with *exceeding joy* before Heaven and Earth; And so are All, not in Christ, with *contempt and dishonour*: And this is the great Mystery and Wonder of the *Oeconomy*, the Order of that Day; That persons rise in the very same State, wherein they lie down; God will have it so, for the clearness of his Judgment; though persons die *in the corner of a Bed*, as the Prophets expression is, yet they shall openly appear in the same circumstances they died; God will have every ones Judgment, as in all orderly Governments, to be *sub Dio*, openly in the Face of Heaven and Earth; they shall all appear as in the Fact *ἐν τῷ ὄρει*; Thus *he will be glorified in his Saints*, and *admired in all them that believe, in that day*; and *justified in the Condemnation of all, whom he condemns*. If God should dispose of some to Hell, and some to Heaven; and that there were no publick account of the matter, we might think, they were so disposed of by God, as by an Arbitrary Power, and in secret, and so his Justice called in Question: But when Spirits, that have been so disposed of in private, both Spirits so publicly, and Bodies are called for together, and the Judgment affirmed; This is clear and open proceeding; and therefore a *Day of Judgment*, and of *Resurrection* is so often spoken of: All shall be brought Face to Face; and we shall not only know one another, who have conversed together, but even of all Ages; *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; Cain and Esau, Saul, Achitophel and Judas*; All shall be known, and we shall know what becomes of every one to Eternity; Death here, and Spirits entring into their everlasting state is not All; of which we may say, *Who knows the Spirit of a Saint, of a wise Virgin*, that goes upward; of a wicked

ed man, of a *foolish Virgin* that goes downward: But at that Day shall be known; All the Good Men, we have read of in Scripture, or in true Accounts of History; And the Evil Men, and Hypocrites; Each Company, and Person, apart, and apart; God and Christ will pass upon all openly, and in Publick.

And that which I would further urge, every one shall Rise in the very Fact, the *imprudens*; in which they lay down, *Belshazzars* in their way, *Diveses* in their way, the Worldlings in their way; and the *Foolish Virgins* in their way, *Crying, Lord, Lord*, without Truth, and Power, as here; The great Tyrants, Enemies of the *Kingdom of Christ*, in their way: To that purpose, they are describ'd, as *having laid their Weapons of War under their Heads, with their Iniquities upon their Bones*, Ezek. 32. 17. and so they'll come to the *Battel of Armageddon*; The Iniquity, and the *Bones*, the Persons, and *Weapons of War* will appear together, in that Day of the *Revelation of the Righteous Judgment of God*; as even then in actual War against the *Lamb* and his Saints. This is the Great, and stupendious management of the *Day of Judgment*, of that Day, and Hour, of which in this Sense especially; and not as relating to Time; *no one knows, no Angels*; no not the Son, as Man; *The Father only*, the Eternal Being alone had Wisdom to find out, Authority, Dominion, and Power, thus to execute.

It is therefore the great Point of *watchfulness*, to Live so, and so to Dye, as we would desire to Rise, and to Appear; we are not therefore on this Account so *sensible*, as we ought to be, how great a thing it is to Dye: We know, it is a common Thing *appointed to all, once to Dye*, and it's no disgrace *to dye the common Death of Men*; because *all Dye*; and some Sense Men have of a Private Judgment, at that Time; but to consider; thus we must Rise, and Appear, as we Dye, Oh how should it oblige us to *Watch*, to get into Jesus Christ, to be *found in him*; *justified by his Blood, sanctified by his Spirit*, full of Faith, Repentance, every Grace; to *Dye*, and *Sleep in*, and by *Jesus*, that we may so Rise, and Appear, *Come with him*: This is indeed the *knowing* so, as that, *that Day* should not take us at *unawares*, and *unready*, as having not *Oyl* in the *Vessel*: For if you get it not now, you can never get it afterward. Let none of us therefore Dye with such vain Hopes.

Arg. 4. All things at the Coming of the Bridegroom shall be

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carried by such a Rapid Motion, That no Tongue can express the swiftness of it; That Saints and wicked men are immediately, Body and Spirit, in that condition, as to Essential Happiness, or Misery, wherein they shall be for ever; and with all the circumstances, in which they lived and died; it is incredible upon any account, but of Divine Power.

There are many Motions so swift, that a Man cannot know them, The greatest Naturalist cannot give an exact account of: The great speed of a Bullet in the Air is wonderfully swift; the motion of the Sun, measur'd either by Hours, Quarters, Minutes or Seconds; No one can conceive, what way the Sun makes in the Heavens in each of them, when he comes as a Bridegroom out of his Chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a Race; and yet, it is nothing in compare with this illustrious Bridegroom, of which that is but a dark shadow; I would mention some Scriptures giving account of this swiftness, Prov. 1. 27. The Destruction of Wicked Men is compared to a Whirlwind, a Motion so sudden, none can express: Malach. 3. 5. I will be a swift Witness, A Witness ought to be considerate, and a Judge patient in hearing; and it is their commendation; But it is the Glory of God, who is both Witness and Judge, all in one, that he is both most just, and yet most swift; I'll do all (saith God) in a very little moment of time; again, you know of what a swift Motion, the Lightning is, from one End of Heaven to the other end of Heaven in a Moment. The Motion of the Sun is exceeding swift, and yet the Motion of Lightning, even as of Light from the Sun, is much swifter; now of such a swift Motion shall all the Carriage of the Day of the Son of Man be; or the Son of Man in his day, shall move as Lightning, Luke 17. 24. What a little time is an Atom of Time; it is the smallest, most undividable for littleness, we can conceive; Now, saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 15. 1, 2. In an Atom or Moment of Time, in the Twinkling of an Eye, the Dead shall be raised incorruptible; and we the living Saints shall be changed: None can express or think this swiftness.

Now from all this, it follows beyond all denial; That if a man could give all the World, he cannot change himself on such a sudden; How can a Man change himself in the Twinkling of an Eye? and that therefore there is no possibility, that any should make a Change then: If we have run therefore with the Footmen, and they have wearied us, how shall we run with the Horsemen? and if while

if while we were in a Land of Peace, we could not draw nigh, *what shall we do in the swelling of Jordan? surely in the Floods of these great Waters, we cannot draw nigh to God*; and therefore, our *watch*, is to be with relation to the *Coming of the Bridegroom*; perfected while we are here, before we are gone out of the Body; for in our Rising again, all will be so sudden, there will be nothing to be done.

And this is a plain and downright sence of *not knowing at what hour our Lord cometh*, and does no ways concern a *Scripture Line of Time* to his *Coming*; For thus understanding, the *Day of the Son of Man*, the *Bridegrooms Coming*, will not be more sudden, on those who shall be alive at it, than on those who lived an Hundred Years ago, or any time since, or at this very Preaching of Christ, or indeed never so long before it; for all shall be railed to feel the suddenness of it, as *David* says, *Psal. 58. 9. Before your Pots can feel the Thorns, he shall take them away living, and in his Wrath*; All shall be done so suddenly and in a moment: And on the other side, take any of the Saints of God, at what time soever they lived, nearer or further off from that Day; that *Day or Coming of the Bridegroom* is no more sudden to those that live nearest, than to those who live furthest off; because they are ready with *Oil in their Vessels*; if this were not so, there had been no force of our Lord's commanding those, to whom he spake, to *Watch*: For in his Discourses, he tells them of *Judea and Jerusalem* being *led Captive of all Nations, till the Time of the Gentiles should be fulfilled*; and that very *Captivation* was Forty Years about, from the Preaching of Christ; and before that came, the Apostle *Paul* assures, *That Day could not come, except the Apostacy came first*, as was before said; The sum therefore is, The truth of Grace standing in Union to Christ by his Spirit, and Holiness flowing from thence, is the true *watching*, and such a *knowing*, as to be ready, and that *Day* not to come as a *snare*, and at *unawares*; Thus Christ keeps his from the hour of *Temptation* that shall come upon all the World, to try them that dwell upon the Earth, *Rev. 3. 10.*

Application. The General Application of so great a Point, that I shall conclude the Discourse of it with is, *That we would search the Scriptures, as those noble Bereans did, whether those things are so or not*? I would desire no other Judge but the Scripture, that excellent Book, that I hope, we have all in so great esteem; now by this it will appear, That I have not spoken these things of

my self, and that I have not spoken the *half* of the *Wisdom* of that blessed Word therein.

And seeing we have so great reason to hope, the Kingdom of Christ is so near, how earnest should we be for the advantage of the Time; How should we desire to see one, that is in Scripture way of speaking, the *first of the Days of the Son of Man*. Oh! What a change would such a *one Day* make in the World, If we say, Why hath not God vouchsafed the World so great an Advantage sooner? The Answer is, *Times*, in this regard, *The Father hath set or constituted in his own power*; He distributes them as he pleases, Why did not our Lord Jesus appear sooner in the World? He came in the *End of the World*, and in *these last days God hath spoken to us by his Son*. And saith our Lord to his Disciples, *Many Prophets and Righteous Men have desired to see the things you see, and have not seen them, and to hear the things you hear, and have not heard them*. But when that Time comes, how will the *Bridegrooms* near approach change the World; Converts will come in as the Drops of Dew from the *Womb of the Morning*, which is stiled, *The Dew of Christs youth*; Then shall the eyes of the blind see out of obscurity; the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, and the Tongue of the stammerers shall speak plainly, Isa. 29. 18. & 32. 3, 4. *The Lame shall leap as an Hart, and the Tongue of the dumb shall sing; and there shall be a way, it shall be called the way of holiness, the unclean shall not pass over it: It shall be so plain and easie, that wayfaring Men though fools, shall not err therein: it shall be so secure, That no Lion, nor ravenous Beast shall be there, it shall be for those, viz. the servants of Christ*. Oh! how shall all this flowing from the *pouring out of the Spirit* from on-high, awaken to make provision of *Oil in the Vessel*, to look to the truth of union to Christ, and secure against *Foolish Virginity*, For the *Wilderness* shall become a fruitful field. But the more particular Application, I reserve for the following Discourse, as conclusive of the whole.

S E R M. XI.

On Matth. 25. 13. *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the Day, nor the Hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.*

I Shall at this Time, by the assistance of God, fully conclude the long Discourse that I have had upon this Great Parable, by re-collecting

collecting all that hath been spoken in practical Applications of it; wherein I cannot but remember what I have so often mentioned, of our Lord's saying, *I will open my mouth in Parables, and utter things that have been kept secret from the foundation of the World.* By Jesus Christ himself, it is applied to himself.

And surely, this is an exceeding great Parable, and it is especially fitted to every one that draws near to God, and to Christ, in the profession of the Gospel. For so (as I have told you) it is very evident, That this Name of *Virgins*, necessarily implies, the most Excellent State of Profession of Christianity, that is not truly and thoroughly, and universally sound; for were it not, that the word *Foolish*, comes in, and like a *dead Fly* (as I told you) makes the whole *Box of ointment, to send forth a stinking savour*; the very name of *Virginity*, every where in Scripture, is on purpose to set forth the reality of Grace, and of a State in Christ. It is said therefore, *The Virgins shall be brought unto thee in Rayment of Needle-work, Psal. 45.* It is a Great State: So *I have espoused you, as a chaste Virgin to Christ.* It is said of the 144000 on Mount Sion with the Lamb; *They have not defiled themselves with Women, for they are Virgins, Rev. 14. 4.* So that, if Christ did not diminish and abate this of Virgins with Folly, it could not but import the perfect and best state of Christianity. And therefore, the more we look upon our selves as Christians, and Christians of the right stamp; the more we must look, that we be not *Foolish Virgins*; that our *Virginity* be not turned into *folly*. As it is said of *Achitophel*, *God turned the counsel of Achitophel into foolishness*, the very *Virginity* of his *Counsel* and *Wisdom*, that was esteemed as an *Oracle*, and never disgrac'd till that time. So when the *Virginity* of the Soul is turned into *foolishness*; It is a very great Judgment, and the very expression of it, ought to awaken and rouze all our Spirits; Not to discourage the thoughts of the sincere servants of Christ, and to make them sorrowful, whom God would have to be made glad, and to rejoice; But that there may be a holy *jealousie* in every one over our selves, and that we may not take Counterfeit for Gold indeed, and for Pearl indeed. I have therefore closed with this Application our Saviour hath made of his whole Discourse: *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day, nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.* That is, as if Christ should say, as I told you there will be nothing done at that time; you can make no advantage, you cannot command that *day* and that *hour*; there's nothing at all to be done; All shall be
in:

in so speedy a Motion, that there will be nothing to be done, by way of Amendment, or Reparation of the Errors, that we have committed. Now therefore, as I proposed to you the last day several great particulars; so I shall pursue them at this time in a way of fuller and more close Application.

First, Take notice of that which is especially meant by *watching*: It must be that very thing, wherein the *foolish Virgins* fell short; for though the *wise*, as well as the *foolish* (in the sence I have given to you) *slumbred and slept*; yet for all that, the *foolish Virgins* only did not *watch*. They are they, that our Saviour grounds the Application upon, *Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour, wherein the Son of Man cometh*. The *wise Virgins* did watch in the main Point, because they looked to it, that all was done, that was necessary to be done, to meet Jesus Christ at his coming, and to go in with him to the Wedding. And therefore, The First particular, wherein we are to exercise this *Watch*, is to look, That we have the Divine and Spiritual Life in us. For no Man hath *watched*, that hath not looked well to this: That he is (as our Saviour expresses it) *passed from death to life*.

If any of us go out of the World (as I told you) In this very life, every thing is to be looked unto: For, though the Day of Judgment, and the Coming of Christ, be a different thing, in many regards from dying; yet notwithstanding, whatever we would do, for that Day of the Coming of Christ, we must do it now, while we are here in the World; All is sealed for Judgment and Eternity at Death: *There's no purpose nor counsel in the Grave* (concerning this point) *whither we are going*. When any rise from the dead, our Saviour makes it very apparent; *John 5*. They rise, either to Life, or Condemnation; There's no arising so, as with any possibility of *passing from death to life* at that time, *v. 28*. *Marvel not at this*, (At what? it is plain what, *viz.* at the mighty quickning Voice of Christ now, for of that Christ had spoken just before:) *for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the Graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation*. You see here, all the whole World of Mankind, at that day of the Coming of Christ, they either rise to the Resurrection of Life, or to the Resurrection of Damnation, nothing is then to be done more. This is a most evident and apparent Truth: And, as I have made out to you; Spirits coming

ing in to Bodies, come either full of the notices of Eternal life, or full of the Notices of Eternal Death; They carry all the Characters upon them: They rise, either to Honour, or to Everlasting shame and contempt. And therefore, as the Apostle speaks, *Ephes. 5. Awake, thou that sleepest, and stand up from the dead, and Christ shall give thee life, ver. 14.* We must look well to this, That we hear the Voice of the Son of God now, and live: The time is coming, and now is, the Dead shall hear the Voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live: Now is the quickning time, according to it Men come forth. The time is begun now, (saith he) and it shall go on to the very coming of the Bridegroom, that they that hear the Voice of the Son of God shall live, ver. 25. *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into Condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.* We must look whether we have shot that great Gulf; of passing from death to life; for, this is a Gulf to be passed now, which in that future state cannot be passed: As you know in that 16th of Luke 24. *There's a great Gulph fixed between us and you; so that they which would pass from you to us cannot, neither doth any pass from us to you, that are in those Regions of darkness:* So I say, the Gulf is now to be pass'd; There is a Pass now, but there shall be none in that State; *they are past from death to life.* It is as if our Saviour should say, They have shot the Gulf: And therefore let us consider, whether God hath changed us (as it were) from West to East? Whether he hath turned us to the Rising of the Sun of Righteousness with Healing in his Wings? Whether he hath turned our thoughts to Eternity, and from the present World, and all the Impurities of it? Whether the Face of our Spirits are to the Kingdom of God, or not? Let us look seriously to all those Scriptures, that teach us concerning the truth of Conversion; concerning the truth of Faith; concerning the truth of Repentance: It is our duty, undoubtedly, to trim our Lamps, in this regard, now; and to search and ransack every thing in our own souls; that we may be assured of the truth of Conversion, and that our hearts are so turned to God, that they can never be turned back again: That we turn our hearts back so to Christ, That we say, *Whither should we go, thou hast the words of eternal life.* To find, that God hath so engag'd our hearts and thoughts to himself, that we can never more revolt from him: And though we fall, and there are many things that we complain of.

The Parable of the Ten Virgins.

of, and bewail, and have reason to humble our selves; yet notwithstanding this, our souls have that Union to Christ, we are so knit to him, That the *Golden Oil* still runs out upon us, from that great *Son of Oil*, that he empties out of himself, to us: That Holy, anointed one, that stands before the Lord of the whole Earth is continually supplying, and giving out to us, from himself.

2. The Second thing that I proposed to you, by way of direction to this *watching*, is, That you would look to this, to be earnest, instant in fervent Prayer, and to pray especially, to this very Point; That you may be counted worthy to stand before Jesus Christ at his coming. Our Prayers ought to be for the present state of Grace, indeed, and for all the signs of it; but we are to have a continual ardency in Prayer, to stand before Christ: For, if you consider, if the very Coming of Christ should be now, if he should now be coming and appearing, every one would be ready to run to their Prayers, to those Prayers they have accustomed themselves to; nay, those that have used themselves to a common and formal way of Prayer, would be ready to stretch out themselves to a higher way; Wherefore, let us endeavour after this, to pray continually, (as if Christ were coming) That we may be delivered from the Guilt of Sin; That we may be delivered from all our corruptions; That we may be in *Robes washed white in his blood*; That we may be in the *Wedding Garment*: That we may have every thing suited to the Glory of his Coming and Appearance: So you shall find our Saviour directs his Disciples, upon this very account, *Luke 21. Watch ye therefore (saith he) and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things, that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man, at his coming. Take heed that our hearts be not overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and with the cares of this life: But that we are in a continual posture of expecting the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. And in the 12th Chapter of Luke 36, And ye your selves like unto Men that wait for their Lord, when he will come, because of the Wedding, that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. We should take great care of the state of our hearts now, that we may at that very time, be found not so as Gluttons, Drunkards are, but Watching, Praying. But you know, There's no such thing, as Gluttony and Drunkenness, in the Future State of Spirits; there's nothing of the cares of this life, in that future state; but, they are the things that now oppress, and that now take away the hearts*

to

of Men. *What doth he say? (ver. 39.) That if the good man of the house had known when the Thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also, for the Son of Man cometh in an hour when ye think not.* The Argument therefore Lies that we should do now what we would do; For just so we shall Rise and Appear: as hath been made out: There ought therefore to be a holy violence upon every ones preparation, by Earnest Prayer and Supplication for that Day; we ought every one to pray, as if just that very day was upon him; We should pray with the same Earnestness, as if that Day, were even now upon us. This therefore is that Great Rule that our Saviour gives us, in Relation to that Time, that we should so pray now, That we should not at that Day, be in the Confusion, and in the Horreur of those Things: *Luke 21. 35. Watch ye and pray, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape those things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man;* You see here, that ye may stand before the Son of Man, there must be a watching to prayer; and a watching upon this very account. *O! that we could be sensible of that Day, and stir up our supplications in that very point!* So the Apostle Peter, For I would endeavour to argue the Scripture upon you, that the great Intention and Earnestness of our Prayer, should run to that very Point, of the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: *1 Pet. 4. 7. The end of all things is at hand, and therefore watch unto Prayer. Let us be continually watching unto Prayer, upon this very account, because the end of all things is at hand.* If we considered that, it would engage and stir up our Prayers; *Be sober and watch unto Prayer,* for our Prayers will meet us then, we shall rise in them at that Day.

3. In the Third Place, Our Watchfulness should stand in this, in a constant, living sense of the Word of God (especially in this great point) upon us: That we should have a Meditation upon the Word of God. It is a very hard thing for us to entertain our thoughts in the Night, when we are awake; or when we are alone; it is a hard thing to know how to employ our Thoughts, and to engage them: And therefore, if we could take the Word of God, That would keep us in an awful sense of God, and of eternal things. David often speaks of his Meditation in the Word of God, *Psal. 119. I meditate in thy Word; I meditate in thy Statutes, it is my meditation all the day.* And *Psal. 1. 1. Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, &c. but his delight is in the Law of the Lord; and in that Law doth he meditate Day and Night.* Saith David, *I stir*

on myself, I am not to be able, to think of anything else, by fasting
If we could seriously bring into our thoughts, the Meditations of
the end of all things; but we are so concern'd for this little spot
of Time; even for that next Moment that is before us, what we shall
eat, and what we shall drink, and what we shall put on, and how this
and that shall be maintained. If our hearts were but suitably and
proportionably fixt upon that, What shall we do for our Eternal
Condition? How shall we bear that Day? Would not any one see
that Day before him, if he were really possess'd of it? If a Man were
to Plead his Cause, and whole condition in this World: who of
us could keep his Heart and Thoughts from oft running into't?
Now, if we could keep our Meditations upon those Scriptures that
speak of this Eternal Condition; I beseech you, endeavour to get up
your selves, and to aspire to it, by the Grace of God; and that you
would meditate on these things, as the Apostle Paul teaches Timothy,
Meditate on these things, that thy profiting may appear to all men; He
speaks indeed there, of the preparation for the work of Preaching
of the Gospel; But let us apply it, for we are every one concerned
in this Great Point, to be Preachers to our selves! Certainly, if eve-
ry one be not a Preacher to himself, all other Preachers can do him
no good at all: And the Excellent Truths that lie in the Word of
God, can do no good, till a Man comes to Preach them to himself:
The Book of Ecclesiastes, is in the English of it, the Book of the Preach-
ing soul: that Book of Solomon, which we call the Book of the Preach-
er, it was the Book of the Preacher, first to himself. Eccl. i. 7. It is
observed by Learned Men, the Word signifies The Preaching Soul.
Every one should be a Preaching Soul to himself, and Preaching this
Great Point, Of the Coming and Kingdom of Christ. And this would
engage our Watch, this would be like the snuffing the Lamps of our
dark Apprehensions, and blowing up the Flame of our cold and
benumm'd affections: It would make the Light more clear, and it
would be like the blowing up the fire; it would enflame and warm
us with the strength and vigour of those great apprehensions, that
pertain to the Coming of Christ. Indeed, it is very sad, That the pre-
sent state of the World is so covered, and so darkened, and so eclipsed,
and so chill'd, and even frozen, in these things; We can go in-
to no Company, nay, we our selves, though we are sensible of these
Truths, we speak them, and hear of them; yet we don't know how
to converse like the Servants of God, That we might be all Preach-
ers to our selves, and one to another in them; It is earnestly to be
hoped, and prayed for, That a better state of things may come on;
and

and that the Spirit may be poured out abundantly; And, *World* (as *Moses* said) *all the Lords People were Prophets*; I cannot reasonably think, that *Moses* spake of a thing that was impossible; But surely, there shall be a time, that every one of the Servants of God shall have something to say, as *Prophets of the Lord*, one to another. And this is the time that is earnestly to be expected, and to be Prayed for: I make no doubt, but the World shall have such a Time of preparation in order to the Great and Glorious Coming of Christ, *Acts 2.17*. Pray observe, God will pour out his Spirit, to this very end, to this very purpose, saith the Apostle, *I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your Sons and you Daughters shall Prophesie, and your young men shall see Visions, and your old men shall dream Dreams*. Every one shall have something to offer to another, concerning God. And on my servants, and on my hand-maidens, I will pour out in those days of my Spirit, and they shall Prophesie. And I will shew Wonders in Heaven above, and Signs in the Earth beneath, &c. And the Sun shall be turned into Darkness, and the Moon into Blood, before that Great (pray, observe that) before that Great and illustrious Day of the Lord come. He will come in the still Voice of his Spirit poured out; and of every one being enabled, as *Moses* saith, as a Prophet. For, would *Moses* (do you think) have said, Would every Atome of Dust upon the Earth could be a Star! (he would not have wish'd such a thing) or, That all the Drops of Water in the Sea might be turned into Gold and Pearls! These things would have been strange in *Moses*; because they are things that never shall be: But now, That all the *Lords People shall be Prophets*; That's a thing God will certainly do, and awaken the World with, before that Great and Illustrious Day of the Lord come. In the mean time, Let us endeavour to be Preaching-Souls unto our selves: This is a thing, I am sure, that no one can have reason to be offended at; Let Men be never so severe, that none must Preach, but such and such, so Educated, and Prepared; yet, to be a Preaching-Soul to our selves, none can be scandalized, or offended at that.

4. In the Fourth Place; Let us take heed and keep our selves from our Iniquity; that there may be no Sin that we shall be found in at the coming of Christ, that we give Indulgence to now, no course of known sin, or of the neglect of any known Duty. Let us take care of this, that we do not allow our selves in any way of sin, that we search and try our ways continually, that we may turn unto God. I'll give you two notable Scriptures to this very purpose; (though a great many more might be given) *I was also up-*

right before him, and kept my self from mine iniquity, *Psal. 18. 23.* That's a very great Scripture, though I have already spake of it; that especially, that I would direct you to now, is in the 139th *Psal. 29. 24.* *Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way Everlasting.* You see here, It is a very Difficult, point. For, If a Virgin may be shut out for ever; what Reason have we to lay our thoughts open before God? and to say unto him, *Search me, O God; I know not how to Search my Self; I am so Dark, and Blind to my self, in my own peculiar Iniquity, That I know it not. But do thou Search me, and know my heart, Try me, and know my thoughts, And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting; Any wicked way in me, That is, The way of living in any Sin, or giving up my self to any Lust.* Let us be mighty Cautious, very careful in This, to lay our selves before God; for, Indeed, If any one would say to me, Which way shall I help my self? You say, That a Virgin may be a Foolish Virgin; You say, That Virginity is the Best State in the profession of Christianity; And yet There may be such a Worm at the Root of it, 'till as may wither it all; What then shall I do? Does not this Discourage in the way of Religion, If I may be so Mistaken, and Deceived in it? Were not the Foolish Virgins as likely in their own Eyes, as the Wise? Therefore I say; No other way, but to lie at the Foot of Christ, and of the Spirit of Christ, and Earnestly to pray, *Search me O God, and know my heart, Try me, and know my thoughts, and my Secret Retirements; and see if there be any any Secret wickedness in me, and lead me in the way Everlasting.* *Psalm 139. 24.* If we did continually This, and if our hearts were fully Set upon it, certainly, God would bring forth our Righteousness as the Light, and our Judgment as the Noon-Day; Surely, God will Discover This, if we are Sincere. It is the best counsel, that can be given, and the best Example, that can be laid before us. And so, That of our Saviour I look upon as the peculiar duty in order to our waiting for the Kingdom of Jesus Christ; I say, I look upon it to be the very peculiar Duty; Our Lord saith, concerning this, *Let your Loins be girded about; and your Lights burning, Luke 12. 35.* And so the Apostle Peter expounds this Scripture more fully to us; and he directs it to this very Point, of Looking to the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, *1 Pet. 1. 13.* *Wherefore gird up the Loins of your Mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.* Besides all the Grace of the Gospel

Gospel at the present; there is the Crowning-Grace. There is the *Triumphing-Grace* that is to be brought to us at the *appearing of Christ*. *Gird up the loins of your mind; be sober and hope to the end, for that salvation.* You know, the *loins*, they are taken for those parts of Human Nature, wherein is the Seat of Sensuality and Corruption most of all; the Bodily Lust that men are affected with; And as the *loins* are girded, a Man is the more expedite, and ready for Motion. So, when all that superfluity of the Flesh, and impure, sensual affection is *girt up*, and we *hope perfectly for the Grace that is to be brought to us at the Revelation of Jesus Christ*: Let us earnestly therefore pray, *Keep back thy Servant from presumptuous sins, that they may not have dominion over me. Then shall we lift up our face, clear as the Morning; and we shall lift up our head without spot, as Job.* If Pride, if Lust, if any inclination to the love of this World, to sensual Pleasures and Delight, if any of this we find to be our sin, any immoderate Lust; or Sin, whatever it is, Let us *gird up the loins of our minds*, wherein we find any extravagant and impetuous Motion to evil prevail upon us.

5. In the *Fifth Place*, Let this be our great care, to meditate much upon Death, Judgment and Eternity: Let those common and general Notions prevail upon us: For my part, I have always, and desire always to Declare, That I do not bind up any one to any particular apprehensions of my own, in these things, although I do fully believe such an appearance of the *Glory and Kingdom of Christ*: Yet I say to every one, Let those general and agreed Notions and Principles, be strong upon your hearts: And the less you can intend, and encline to believe such an *Appearance and Kingdom of Christ*, be the more Intent upon those Four Last Things, as they are generally called: that is, *Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell*. Let those General and acknowledged, and impressed Points, be always upon your Minds. O! What kind of persons should we be, if we did but grow up to the acknowledged Points of Christianity, *Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell*. Let us always take these into consideration, and there is no Christian but owns them: even *Papists* themselves, those of them that have been more Devout than others, have written very excellently and very notably upon these things; these Principles that run so mightily into all the sence of Christianity: God forbid, that any thing should be said to take off the plain Consideration, and the strong Apprehension, and the close Meditation, and the mighty influence of those Four Things from us. For who can enough speak of them, or consider them?

take

Take them in the plainest sense that you can ; And Oh that God would give you to feel, even every one of us, to feel the full work of them upon our hearts ; that they may have, every one their perfect work upon our hearts : That (as I may allude) the Chariots of our Souls may be always moving upon these Four Wheels, and that our Chariots may never stand still, but lift us up continually above the Earth. It is my earnest Prayer for every one of us (speaking and hearing) That our Souls may be as the *Chariots of Ammadab* ; carried upon these Four Wheels of *Death and Judgment, Heaven and Hell*. And indeed, though I look upon it as a great Scripture-Truth, and which hath so great Evidence, as cannot be contradicted ; yet I am far from pressing any one to take into Consideration ; I mean, those Apprehensions concerning such a Kingdom of Christ ; So that they should take off any thing from the serious Meditation of *Death and Judgment, Heaven and Hell*. And I would desire only those persons to take them into Consideration, that find they are more enlivened, and more enlarged, and more enflamed by the strong Consideration of the Great Things, Scripture hath spoken, and that are in a visible and apparent way, to bring forth the *Glory of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ*. And therefore, I hope, there is nothing that can be justly Taxed, in endeavouring to seek further into the Doctrines of Christianity, beyond those that are but the *Beginning Principles of the Doctrine of Christ* : I would exhort every serious Christian, to make these it his continual Meditation, and that nothing may take off the edge of his Spirit in these things. Say now, Am I not to die ? And must I not come to Judgment ? Is it not said, *It is appointed to all men once to die, and after this the Judgment ?* Am I not immediately to come into a Judgment, and determination of my Eternal Condition ? And am I not to stand before Christ in Judgment ? Don't we all own that ? And is there not a Heaven, and an Eternity of Happiness ? And is there not on the other hand, a black and dark Eternity, even utter darkness, and for ever ? O that God would enable us to carry this all in our Minds ! the Eternity of Happiness, and the Eternity of Misery. You know, great Princes are Pictured with great Globes in their hands, but Jesus Christ hath those Two great Globes, the *Keys of Death, and Hell* ; and *Eternal Life to give*. Let these things be our plain and constant Meditation ; Let us cut off every thing that we think is singularity ; I am still of the same Apprehension, that the Scripture hath declared, *a visible Kingdom and Glory* that is near ; Yet I beseech you, that you would get these into your constant Apprehension.

And

And, O that they might fall upon every one; Let nothing of Notion or Opinion take off from these Great Things; Let us continually take our Walk and Meditation into those Regions beyond this World: Let us say, I am to go out of this World, and this State; and O, how Great must the Change be! That I must immediately enter into an Eternity of Happiness, or an Eternity of Misery. Nothing will make the Doctrine of Christ so powerful, as to have a strong Meditation of these Things: And then

In the Seventh Place, Let us take heed of the sins of the Time wherein we live (though, by all means, we are to take heed of the open Profanenesses that are in the World) but, I beseech you, That we may all look to this, There are the peculiar Sins of those that are called *Virgins*; There's something peculiar to every Time; And therefore, as I have intimated to you, in that *Rev. 3. 1. That Church of Sardis*, I have for some time, look'd upon it to be the Pourtraiture of these very Times, and this very State we are upon: It is a Picture of the Church of Christ in that State we call *Protestant*, and in that State we call, *The Reformation*: And therefore, observe how that is described, and let us look very diligently, that we don't fall into those very sins: *And unto the Angel of the Church in Sardis, Write, These things, saith he, that hath the Seven Spirits of God, and the Seven Stars: I know thy works, That thou hast a Name that thou livest and art dead.* O, Let us take heed of having a Name. To be a *Protestant* is a *Name to live*: To be of the *Reformed Churches*, is a *Name to live*: Take heed, Is it not the General State of this very Age, of this very Time? *We have a Name to live, and yet are dead*: Among all the several Professions and Churches of Christianity, in the Reformed way, at this Day, surely it is a Sin that lies upon every one, *They have a Name to live, and yet are dead*: We find it one in another, but every one may find too much, that he hath a *Name to live, but is dead*. We may say to our selves, Is this like one that is come out of *Popery*, upon the account of Conscience, and upon the account of Truth and the Word of God? *This is a Name to live*; because, say we, the things that *Papists* profess, and that they do, are not according to the Word of God: Why now, if it be a *Name to live*, to come out from among them, *Take heed that we are not dead*; If we have not the Power of Godliness, in the Profession of the Reformed and Protestant Religion, *It is but a Name to live*; be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain, and are ready to die. O! how truly may we say, That the Things in order to the Kingdom of Christ, they are ready to die; every where,

among

among all sorts of Professors! How ready is the Publick Way of Worship, to die, for want of the Power of what they Profess? And, if you look upon the Congregated Professors, with what reason do they complain, They are grown very Proud, very Worldly, very Vain, notwithstanding all their Profession. So here's a Name to live, in order to the Kingdom of Christ, but they are ready to die. Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die; Here's that Watch that Christ speaks of: We should take heed, and watch, that the things which remain, and are ready to die, might be quickned and have a new life; For (saith he) *I have not found thy Works perfect before God: I have not found them filled out, and filled up: They are just like a Stalk of Wheat, that looks as if it were something, and yet, like one of Pharaoh's lean Ears, if we come to search, and enquire into it, and to Rub it (as we speak) in our hands, we find it to be nothing; so indeed, we may sadly complain, when we come to Rub Profession, either in others, or in our selves; it is very thin, and lean, and lank: And therefore our works are not filled up before God.* Now, what saith Christ? *I will come upon thee as a Thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.* Let us therefore be very diligent in this thing, to look to have the Power of our Profession, to have the Power of the Protestant Religion, to have the Power of the Reformation. For indeed, It is a very sad thing, that so many of us, as have a Zeal against Popery; a Zeal against the Corruption of that State; That yet we should sink so much below some of the Devotionists among them: For undoubtedly, There are some among them, that seem to be under a greater Profession than many Protestants are. To hear a Man swear against their Religion profanely, and to see a Man Drinking, and Carousing, and saying, according to the very usual ways of Mens Discourse: To drink (as it were) Healths to Protestants: Is not this an abominable Shame, and that speaks our great dishonour? And that may make even Papists scandalized at the loose, and licentious way of those that call themselves Protestants; To hear Men Swear and Damn, and blaspheme, and yet at the very same time, to profess a Zeal against Popery. Certainly this we ought to take care of, That we are not carried away by the Name of a Wicked, Licentious, Blasphemous and Profane Protestantism. And beyond this, we should look; That that Pride, Vanity, Cruelty, Earthliness and Oppression, and whatever the Sins are, that are among us, that we do not cover them, and disguise them, under the Name of this; Why yet, for all

all this, I am not a Papist, I am a Protestant; surely, God will tear that Name out of the Mouths of such Protestants. As he saith in *Ezekiel*, *You sow Pillows and Kerchiefs*; that is, some disguising things upon their heads: And (saith he) *I'll tear these Kerchiefs*, *Ezek. 13*. So God will tear off from those that have the Profession of Protestantism, but have nothing of the Power, Life and Zeal of the Reformation, and their Open Testimony for the Kingdom of Jesus Christ, that very Profession from them.

In the last Place (that I may draw to a Conclusion.) Notwithstanding all that I have said to you, concerning the Thoughts of Death and of Judgment, and of Heaven and Hell; yet I would desire, that we may have a sence of the Glory, and of the Kingdom of Christ, that is to appear; and that you would look to have it in your hearts, to have the Kingdom of God in your hearts.

Let me propose a great Scripture to you upon this account: And after a short Explanation of it, I'll conclude in a few Words, *Luke 17. 20*. There was a great Question put to Christ in this case; He was demanded of the Pharisees, when the Kingdom of God should come; he answered them and said, *The Kingdom of God cometh not with Observation*: Neither shall they say, *lo, here, or lo, there*: for behold the Kingdom of God is within you. That's the Kingdom of God; For in some way, certainly, there's none of us but Profess it: else, why do we pray it should come; When that, which is the Great Petition, the very Central-Petition of the Lord's Prayer, surely that's the very Key that turns all about? Now I say, if you would believe a Kingdom of God in any sence: And that you will be ready to say, *When shall that Kingdom come?* Remember what Christ saith, it does not come by Observation; for Men shall not say, *Lo, here, or lo, there*; Though indeed, it shall be a Glorious Sight, a Glorious Shew, as the Apostle saith, *which in his Time he will shew*. Yet for all that, you shan't say, *Lo, here comes Christ, and here come such and such Saints*: And here comes such a Glory, and Heaven and Earth glowing in a flame. You shan't say, *here or there*, thus and thus it is, though you shall have reason to say so: yet (saith Christ) the main thing is, *The Kingdom of God is within you*. What will you be the better for that Kingdom of God, if it be not within you? You must bring it to that Day, *The Kingdom of God comes not with Observation*; it does not come with a shew without us, but our God will come, and all his Saints shall come with him. They shall come with Bodies of Glory, and Bodies of Light, Bodies full of Glory: it does not come with an outward

shew, but *within us* : Every one that hath not the *Kingdom of God within him*, at that Day, they will appear by that very thing, to be *foolish Virgins* ; for, they must bring that *Kingdom* in the *Righteousness of Christ*, with *peace of Conscience*, through his *Bloud*, by *Grace*, and by *Vertue of his Holy Spirit*.

And now, I beseech you, That you would ballance these two things continually one with another. You pray that the *Kingdom of Christ* may come : The *Kingdom of Christ* comes, when his *Day* comes ; when the *Day* and *Appearance of Christ* comes, 2 Tim. 4. 1. Now, Amos. 5. 18. Saith God, *Wo unto you that desire the Day of the Lord, to what end is it for you ? the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light* ; As if a man did flee from a *Lion*, and a *Bear* met him ; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a *Serpent* bit him. It is just such a thing (saith the Prophet) as if a man in a storm, should go into a house, and take shelter there ; and when he found the storm ready to carry him away, he goes, and leans upon a *Wall*, and there a *Serpent* comes out of a *Hole*, and bites him to *Death* ; Even so shall the *Kingdom and Day of Christ* be, It is in vain to say, *Thy Kingdom come*, If that *Kingdom* be not *within us* : for, It comes not with *Observation*, but it is *within us*.

O Therefore ! That we could be perswaded to get out of the formality of that *Petition*, and to look for that *Kingdom within* ; *Thy Kingdom come* by my Enjoyment of such a presence of thy *Kingdom* within my own heart. That when it comes, I may come with it, and it may come along with me : for else, I say, it will be darkness, and not light. I make no doubt, there was a great many, that the Prophet spake usually to them, of the *Day of the Lord*. You know, it is an usual expression in Scripture, *The Day of the Lord* : And, upon the often hearing of it, Men come to say, We would fain see it : And so, many are ready to say concerning that *Kingdom* ; if it be such a Glorious State and Thing, we would fain see it. Now remember, it comes not with *observation*, but you must have it *within you* ; for, if you have it not *within you*, it is in vain for you ; for, for what end do you desire the *day of the Lord* ?

To shut up this in a brief Recollection of all, In the *First Place*, I desire you seriously often to meditate upon this Parable, as I have in some weak manner, endeavoured to open it to you. And to remember also, That even my Christianity (say to your selves) will not

not do me any service; I had as good have been a *Heathen*, as to the main purpose of my Eternal Condition, if I have not *Oil in my Vessel*; if I have not truly a great replenishing of my Soul from the *Great Son of Oil*. And so, if you speak of *Protestantism*; If you have not *Oil in your Vessel*, it will be but a very empty thing, and do you no good, except you have *Oil in your Vessels*; except you are united to Jesus Christ; except you have the *Kingdom of God within you*: And then

In the *Second Place*: Another great Use (for I only draw out the main scope of the *Parable*, by way of Recollection, unto you, and so conclude) I say, seriously consider, What ever you think to do for your souls, do it now, because there is no Time after, *Work while it is day, the night cometh when none can work*. All the time that persons have lain in the Grave (as we speak) or that their Spirits have been in Happiness, or in Misery, they have not done the least thing for their souls; they have not added *one Cubit*, nay, not one Hairs breadth to their *Stature*, they have not made one Hair (as our Lord speaks *Proverbially*) either *white or black*, as to the State of their Spirits; And when Spirits come to meet their Bodies, in the Day of the Resurrection, every thing will be in such a speed, such a World in highest motion, That you cannot stay to change one ill Posture, or Appearance, or Representation of your souls. You must not stay, I would speak according to the Language of the *Parable*. *Can the Bride forget her Attire*? If any of us have forgot our Attire, we cannot mind any thing that is amiss; We cannot fasten one Pin in that distress of our souls: We must be in the *Wedding Garment* perfectly attired, and arrayed: For what is done then (as I have often said) is done in an *Atome of Time*. The dead shall be raised *incorruptible*, Wicked Men, and *Foolish Virgins*, shall be raised just as they *die*. And therefore, mind seriously to do for your souls, what you'd do, in this present state. And then,

Lastly, As I have said, I say again, That you would earnestly pray for the Preparation of that Time, Pray earnestly for the *pouring out of the Spirit*; Do you think it will not be better for you, when God shall pour out his Spirit upon all flesh, when your Sons and your Daughters shall Prophecie; when your old men shall dream Dreams, and your young men shall see Visions? When there shall be an universal Prophecie upon the People of God;

as I have greatest reason to hope, that the time is very near: Why should we not earnestly pray for it, and desire it?

You think, there will be too much Clutter, and ado about Religion then; don't mistake, Whatsoever is done, shall run so easie, and quiet then, with such advantage, and the Great Cares and Disadvantages of the World shall be taken off, and every thing shall be in a merciful order, that we may be prepared for that Great and Notable *Day of the Lord*.

And therefore, Let us earnestly pray and wait, That a better State, both of Christianity in General, and the *Reformation* in particular, may come forth, That those *Thunders* that have been *Sealed* since the *Reformation*, for almost an Hundred and Eighty Years, That their *Mouths* may be open, and their *Voices* may utter themselves. That every thing may be that tends to increase and promote Holiness, Purity and Spirituality, and Heavenliness; for I am not speaking, nor never did speak to you of a Kingdom of Eating and Drinking, and putting on Glorious Apparel; but that there shall be an universal *knowledge of God* and *Jesus Christ*. And that none but those that are resolved to be *filthy* should remain *filthy*; and those who give up themselves in Holy ways, should be Encouraged, and should *mount up with Eagles Wings, and Grow stronger and stronger*. And therefore, that there is but the Hopes of these things, Let us Bless God Exceedingly. For many *Prophets* and *Wisemen*, and *Kings*, and *Righteous Men* have desired to see those things, which you see and have not seen them, and to hear those things, which you hear, and have not heard them.

And yet for all that; If any of us are called to Die, who are Sincere, and faithfull; God will give us so much certainly of that Spirit of *Prophecie*, of *Illumination*; of *Revelation*, That shall carry us safe to Heaven; and shall Search and Try us so, That we shall be led out of any wicked way into the way that is *Everlasting*.

And therefore, Let not these things Discourage you, But let them Enflame our Care, Zeal, Endeavours and Desires; That we may *Watch*, Because Nothing can be done, when our Lord comes, but only, *They that are Ready, Go in with Him to the Wedding*.

F I N I S.

An Apology

A N
A P O L O G Y

For the Hope of the
Kingdom of Christ,

Appearing Within This
Approaching Year, 1697. ¹⁸⁵⁸

Wherein some of the Principal Arguments for such
an Expectation are briefly Couch'd, and the

Greater Objections Answered.

Presented to the Notice and Examination of the
Arch-Bishops and Bishops
Now in P A R L I A M E N T Assembled.

By **T. BEVERLEY.**

Ezek. 10. 13. *As concerning the Wheels, It was cryed to them, in my Hearing, Ob! Revolution!*

L O N D O N:

Printed for, and Sold by Will. Marshal at the Bible in Newgate-Street, and John Marshal at the Bible in Grace-Church-Street,
1697.

APOLGY

For the Bishops of the

Kingdom of Great Britain

Appearing Within Their

Approaching Year, 1697

Wherein some of the principal Arguments for their
Expectation are briefly Considered, and the

Greater Objections Answered.

Printed for the Bishops and Bishops

Now PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED

By T. BAKER

Printed for the Bishops and Bishops

LONDON:
Printed for the Bishops and Bishops
Printed for the Bishops and Bishops

An APOLOGY for the Hope of the
Kingdom of Christ, Entring Its Succession
 within this Now Beginning 1697. And an
 Answer of Principal Objections presented
 with It.

To the Archbishops and Bishops, as in Parliament at
 This Time Assembled.

Most Reverend,
 Right Reverend,

I Have now, by the Space of Fourteen, or Two Weeks of
 Years, been Serving for that Beautiful-Rachel-State of the
 Church of Christ, in the place of that *Rachel in the Wil-*
derness, weeping for her Children in Sackcloth, and under
Death; and would not be comforted, Because *They were not.*
 I have set my self all along, by Meditation, and Supplication to
 the Father of Lights, to search out, and by the Assistance of the
 Spirit of Prophecy, to Find, What, or What Manner of Time the
 Spirit of Christ did signify, for the Fullfilling that Grand Petition
 of his Servants; *Thy Kingdom come, That thy Name may be Sancti-*
fied, and Thy Will done, as in Heaven, and upon Earth; and I am
 now Wrestling to the Break of Day, and I Hope, the Dawn of the
 Morning, and Resolv'd, not to Let Go, Till I obtain the Blessing of
 it.

The Time, that from the First, and throughout, it pleased the
 Lord of Time to fix upon my Mind, as the Time of That King-
 dom Entring into its Succession, and Preparation for its Glory, was,
 and is, This Approaching 1697. A Year, to which I could have
 no Temptation, either in Regard of Nearness, or Distance, or
 on any Account whatever, but as a Scripture-Line of Time, and

Concurrent Reasons of *Prophecy*, and *History*, very many, and in a Series and Continuation have I ed me.

On this Foundation, having Settled, I have by Gracious Vouchsafements of Help from God, Turn'd my Self to All the Grand *Prophetick* Points of Scripture; and Found New Confirmations, and have Given as Publick Accounts of them, as I could attain, and presented some of Them to Your Selves, and to the Great Council of the Nation: And in as much as Supreme Goodness hath Granted me to Set up an *Eben Exer*, now at the Portal of 97. I have Thought it my Duty to offer this *Apology* for the *Kingdom of Christ* so near Approaching; And that The Great *Isaac*, The Son of Promise, of Universal *Laughter* and Rejoycing, The *Desire of all Nations* will Appear at a Set Time this Next Year, the very Last of those Three Set Seasons, Time, Times, Half Time; Eleven Times expressly, or Virtually Recorded in *Scripture Prophecy*; and therefore I can have no Doubt; But in the observing These so often Repetitions, Remarking close upon Them, and on what Accounts They are Recalled, and to what Applied; and Ballancing These, One with Another, I have Arriv'd to Full Assurance, They are Assign'd to the Papal Last State of the *Roman Monarchy*, the Last of the *Four Kingdoms*, or *Monarchies* (and the *Fourth*) now Expiring in the Expiration of These Times and Half.

Indeed I look upon no Truth of Scripture to be more Plain and Certain, except the Articles of Faith, and Rules of Holy Practice necessary to Salvation, Then that Those *Four Monarchies* are given as a Calendar of Time for the Embarrassment of the *Kingdom of Christ*, or that Glorious State of Christianity, which even the *Prayers*, styl'd, *Establish'd by Law*, oblige the Belief, Desire, and Expectation of: Scripture takes therefore so particular Notice of the *Four*, viz. the *Babylonian*, and *Persian*; as is well known; and Takes Account of Their Time; of the *Grecian* more obscurely; Yet the very New Testament, in that Language, and the so often Division of the People of that Time, into *Jews* and *Greeks*, is a very undoubted Owning Them, as one of the *Monarchies*; Out of which, through a Great Part of the 70 Weeks, the State of the World had been sliding into the *Fourth*, the *Roman Monarchy*, which Surrounds the whole New Testament History, and Prophecy, as is undeniable.

But as soon as ever the Time allowed to the last of these is at an End, The *Kingdom of Christ* will immediately succeed, and there can

can be no *Inter-Ruin*; Nor can any other *Kingdom* Interpose. *The Vision is so sure; and its Interpretation so certain*; And such a kind of *Kingdom* it must be, as was *Congenially* to have its succession so *Connexed* to those before it, that tho it is a *Holy*, a *Heavenly*, a *Spiritual*, yet it must be also a *Visible*, *Sensible* *Kingdom*, as to the *Dominion*, and *Glory* of it, and no *Metaphor*, or *Allegorical* sense can satisfy without it. And we know the *Nations*, to which we belong, are a part of the *Ancient Roman Empire*, and *Remaine* still of the *Ten*, into which it was *cannon'd*; Which *Division* hath been to me an *Infallible Reason* of *Confidence*, *France* should no more prevail to an *Universal Monarchy*, then the *House of Austria* hath done. And herein for the keeping it within the *Figure*, allowed its *King* by *Prophecy*; I know God hath made our *K.* an *Instrument*. All the *Iron* of it, could never break the *Northern Iron and Steel* of the *sure Word* of *Prophecy*. But seeing we, I say, are such a part of the *Ancient Roman Empire*, we are the more concern'd, and ought to be the more Awake on the *Fulfilling* of *Prophecy*, as of the first of the *Kingdoms* of the *World*, which is to become the *Kingdom of the Lord*, and of his *Christ*.

I have the same assurance, that this *Time*, *Times*, and *Half Time*, must be just on the *Expiration*; By *Prophecy*, we might rather have expected their *End* sooner; The *Wisdom* of the *Divine Spirit* draws them so very near to the *Time* of the *Roman Empire* Becoming *Christian* in all its *Portraitsures* of the *Anti-Christian State* (As I know my self able, by *Divine Assistance* to make out to the satisfaction of Any, that will allow themselves the thought, they know, and yield necessary in any more retired *Parts of Science*) That had I not the *Faithful Evidence* of the *Scripture Line of Time*, (I have already mention'd) together with *uncontestable Events*; I should *Fourteen Years* ago have pitch'd upon some nearer *Time*; For (to mention one of the most obvious) the very *Casting* the *1260*, and *Additional 75* so manifestly into *Indictions*, or *Fifteens* of *Years*, a *Character* of *Time*, not *Regulated* and known till soon after *Constantine*, would have *Enclin'd* to have commenced them sooner.

I know, the *Hope*, for which I *Apologize* cannot, but *Encounter* *Great Objections*, but I am assured, God hath set it, and my self as a *Minister* of it, as a *Braven Wall*, that tho it be *Fought against*, It shall not be *prevail'd over*.

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The Objections, and Solutions, I shall very much in short thus Account for : First, It will be pretended against it ; It is a Presumptuous Curiosity to undertake to Pry into *Prophetick Times*, and that it ought to be immediately check'd with that of our Lord ; *It is not for you to know the Times, and Seasons which the Father hath Set in his own Power.*

But as to that Particular Scripture, it is evident, it was an Important Enquiry of the Apostles ; not in the order of Scripture Researches, nor in the due waiting for of the promise of the Spirit, which was the Duty of that very Juncture ; And therefore tho' our Lord is quick upon their disorderly question, yet he implies, there would be a Gracious method for their Resolution in it, and commands them to *Jerusalem*, to wait for *The promise of the Spirit from the Father*, which saith He, you have heard of me, One Branch of which was, *The shewing them things to come*, Joh. 16. 14. And in general, we find the search of *Prophetick Times*, is much more under the Favour, then the Displeasure of Scripture ; It is recorded with Honour to the *Children of Issachar*, *that they had understanding of Times, and knew what Israel was to do* ; Particularly concerning *Dauids Kingdom*, which was the concernment of that Time ; And in which I doubt not, they laid together the Prediction of *Jacob*, and other Revelations of God peculiar to that People, and those Times, by which they were able to give a Judgment : And it is observed, *Their Brethren were at their Command* ; This sway'd no doubt in the Union of *Israel in David* : C. 9. 1. The Prophet *Daniel* was not satisfied with what he found by Immediate Revelation, but understood by *Books of Scripture*, and civil Records (It is a Recommendation of that method) *the Number of Years God had Determin'd for the Desolations of the Sanctuary* ; The Prophets in the same manner search'd, *What and what manner of Time, the Spirit which was in them did signify* ; The Apostle by the Spirit Praises the *Giving heed to the sure Word of Prophecy, as doing well*. Seeing then the Account of Time is one eminent Branch of that *sure Word*, It is Praise-worthy to give heed to that, and no Presumption to do so : Our Lord charges it as *Hypocrisy*, not to discern *the Signs of the Times*, those Characters and Notes of Impression God hath set upon them by *Prophecy* : How often is there Encouragement given in that Great Prophecy of the New Testament, *Blessed is he that Readeth, and they that hear the Words of the Prophecy of this Book. Let Him that hath Wisdom Count.* Here

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is the Mind that hath *Wisdom*; Let any one now Impartially lay these things together, and it will plainly appear, There is warranty for searching Times revealed in Scripture; And They are still in the *Father's Power*, when the Knowledge of them is waited for by the assistance of his Spirit, in the understanding of his Word.

It may be further Argued against the Defining of Time from *Scripture-Prophecy*; That the Scripture-Prophecies are so Dark, and *Enigmatical*, that it appears most probable; The Spirit of God did not intend, They should be understood, or Laid Open, till the very End of All Things, at the *Day of Judgment*, or in the Kingdom of Heaven in Eternity; And therefore, The Soberest, Gravest Men, though very Learned, and of Great Sagaciousness, do not engage themselves therein, and Least of All in the Accounts of Time.

To This I would, by way of Defence, Rejoyn in the First Place; That it is most True, That in the Darkness of the Present State, while the *Apostacy* of the *Papal State* so much Eclipse the Glory of Christianity, There is a Great Indisposition, and a Great Inability to Interpret *Scripture-Prophecies*; The *Unlearned say, They are not Learned*; and the *Learned say, The Book is Sealed*; And This Begets a Prejudice against Any Undertakers herein; and they are Charged with Boldness, and Presumption, or with Madness or *Enthusiasm*; It is said to Them, *Which way went the Spirit of the Lord from us to you?* How come you to be wiser than others? And this will in a very Great Measure continue, till the Kingdom of Christ come into its Succession, that the *Ears of the Deaf shall hear the Words of this Book, and the Eyes of the Blind see out of obscurity.*

But yet, in the second place, it is undeniable, That which is most *Enigmatical*, and under what we call *Riddle*, if it be wisely contriv'd, and design'd, must have sense under it, tho not so open, but that it shall require close Attendance, the most Exercised Thought; And on those Terms it is so prepar'd, that it may be understood, and excellent Sense found under it, tho a *Riddle*. *Samsons Riddle* had a very certain Determinate sense, and if we knew fully the meaning of it, advances beyond the First Unriddling, very admirable Instructions; All retired Parts of Knowledge in *Anatomy, Astronomy, Mathematicks, Algebra*, Call for Understandings peculiarly fitted to them, and most attent Application, and Curious Instruments; *Microscopes, Telescopes*; and yet the Knowledge, and Assurance,

Assurance, that rises from them, when understood is the most Refined and Satisfactory: And so it is in *Prophecy of Scripture*, altho it does not offer it self at so easie a Rate; as some other Points of *Scripture-Knowledge*: Yet by deep and fixed Meditation, by comparing of its parts, one with another, and especially waiting upon the *Spirit of Prophecy* for its *Illumination*, we shall find, it is prepar'd, and weigh'd out with the greatest Severity of Truth, Divine Sense, and leads into very sublime Discoveries of Divine Wisdom in the Government of the World; in Relation to his Church, the Times and Seasons of it; And tends to the Greatest Awe of God, and obedience to the Supreme Majesty of Heaven, and Earth, and to know, *That he is God.*

In the Third Place, It is affirm'd by the Spirit of God, that it is intended, it should be understood; For it affirms, *2 Pet. i. 19, 20. It is a Light that shines in a Dark Place.* Now if it be darker, than the *Dark Place*, How can it be call'd a *Light*? Or how can it enlighten such a *Dark place*? And it is not of *Private Interpretation*, as I have heretofore given an Account publicly; The very meaning is, It is not of a Reserv'd, or Apart-Interpretation; As it is said, *Christ privately, or apart Interpreted his Parables to his Disciples.* God says of Himself, *Esa. 45. 19. I have not spoken in secret, or in a Dark Place of the Earth, like the Dark dubious Oracles of Devils: I Jehovah speak Righteousness; I declare the things that are Right, of Greatest Sincerity, Uprightness and Truth, not perplex'd, but plain to them that understand most Right, Straight, and direct, to Him that understandeth; Right to them, that find knowledge; And I have not said, faith our God, to any of the Seed of Jacob, Seek ye my Face in Vain,* Even for the understanding of the *Prophecies* of my Word; And in the very same Chapter, God Encourages to *Ask of Him Things to Come*; Even, as his Spirit is said to shew to his Servants *Things to Come*: All which I hope, will appear a sufficient Answer to the Suspicion; That God gave the *Prophecies* of his Word, and so Eminent a Part of them; *Numbers of Time*; and did not intend, they should be understood.

If it be taken as in this very Joiner, and Objected, How comes it to pass? That All, who hitherto have Writ on *Prophetical Scripture*, have much differ'd one from another, and they who Fix'd Time, have either liv'd to see themselves mistaken, or it hath appear'd after their Death, They have been so: I desire, it should

should be considered; Those, who as the Holy Servants of Christ, and Ministers of his Word, have set Themselves to Understand, have Given Great Light, and Broken the Way for Those who have Followed; and Their Memory and Services are precious to All Wise, and Good Men, notwithstanding some Mistakes, and thereupon Differences; which are yet not more, or Greater, than Those we Find in most Points: nor Fundamental, and in All Interpretation of Scripture: And as to their Mistakes, in Point of Time, It is to be Allowed, Their Distances, some of Them, from the Time of Completion, might be their Disadvantage; God not vouchsafing such Light concerning that Time, till nearer upon it; as not to Daniel, but upon the very Year of the 70 Years Ending.

It is further to be considered; That there are some Eminent and Learned Persons, who have, though upon somewhat Different Grounds, yet concurred upon this very 97. and some so near it, as upon 98, 99, and especially 1700. That their Expectations are yet (as I may say) in Abeyance; and Things most probably will be so Conducted, as easily to Reconcile to small Disagreements, by the First Breakings out of Light, and further Illustrations.

But Herein I Humbly Magnifie, and Adore the Freedom of Grace, and Divine Assistance to his Unworthiest Servant; That He hath Granted to me, to Lay before me, the Whole and Entire *Propheetical Table* of his Word, which is the Greatest Security against Mistake, that can be vouchsafed: Because by the View and Survey of things together, They are seen in their Just Situations, and Allowances of Room, and placed Equally, one in proportion to another; That there may be no Croud, Confusion, Jostle upon, or Interfere one with another: Whereas, if this be not, a plausible Semblance, or Sound of Agreement may mislead.

If such a *Scheme* be Reflected upon, as Imaginary, and the Work of Fancy, I make an Humble Challenge to all the Wit, the Fancy, the Learning that is in the World, to Give a Parallel Scheme in such an Agreement with the Word of God, and the Providential Events in Concert with it: By which I am assured, It is not, nor cannot be my own, but as Found in Sacred Writings; seeing Fancy and Imagination cannot create in-to Self-subsistent Things; or Erect into undoubted matter of

that there are such odd, such Prophetic Emblems and Representations; Such Examples of the Way and Manner of Interpretation as that *Nebuchadnezzar's* *the Hill of Gold*; *the King of Persia*; *the Beast*; *the King of Greece*; *the He Goat*; *The Babylonish Woman*; *the City on Seven Mountains*; that at the Time of the Revelation Given, was then *Reigning over the Kings of the Earth*; All These Give such a Pattern of the Manner of Interpreting *Prophetic Images*, and what way the Spirit of God means, They should be Expounded, and Decyphered; that They are Equal to Matter of Fact; That there are such Numbers, as 2300 *Eves*, *Months*; 170 *Weeks Time*, *Times*, *Half a Time*; *Three Days and an Half*; 1260; 1290; 1335 *Days*, 42 *Moons*; And all these to be multiplied by the *Prophetic Standard of Time*, or *Days for Years*; And that These, are some of Them Repeated, variously plac'd, is plain Matter of Fact. To find therefore the Concern of these, and to place Them in their Just Order one towards another, and in the Greatest Friendliness, Peace, Harmony, and Beautiful Symmetry; and with that, the Admirable Air, and Mien of the Divine Wisdom, finding out the Knowledge of All *Wise Inventions* herein; and then Supervening, or Coming upon All These, Substantial, Undoubted Matters of Fact; the Greatest Events, that have been in the World; Adjustable to these *Numbers of Time*, Comprobated and Assured by the most Valuable *History and Chronology*, that are in the World; All Make up such a *Pterophery*, a *Fullness of Assurance*, that must needs deliver from the Scruple, that *Fancy*, and *Imagination* have had the *Architecture* of such a *Triangular*, as I may call it, Compag of Things, in such a Justice of Respect one to another, such a Trine, or Threefold strongest Combination one with another.

For to give a Summary Delineation, on what Grand Pillars of Event the Emblems of *Prophecy* are Planted, or drawn; and what Proportions of Time are adjusted to them, and then how well it is known, That such Events and within some General Ken of such Allowances of Time are own'd by *History and Chronology* to those Events, is the Greatest Satisfaction, that can be given; For either small Petite, or Obscure Events will Disgrace any *Prophetic Scheme*; And to be out of all Boundaries of Time, is as Dishonourable.

The

The Root therefore of *Prophetic Time*, I make that *Suspicious Failure* of the so *Illustrious Type* of the *Kingdom of Christ*; the *Reigns of David*, and *Solomon* at the *Death of Solomon*; and the *Incredible Depression* of Them, had not *Entered* *Waiter's* it, in the *Division* of the *Tribes* into the *Two Houses of Israel*, and *Judah*; Till Both Involv'd, each in a *dreadful Captivation*, distinct to Each. The *Rescue*, and *Deliverance* of the *Two Tribes* from their *Captivity in Babylon*, was by the *Destruction* of that *Monarchy*, the *First* of the *Four*, and the *Decree of Cyrus*, the *Founder* of the *Persian Monarchy*, at the *End* of the *390*, and *40 Years* of the *Visional Bearing of Iniquity* for them, and setting the *Prophetic Standard* of a *Day* for a *Year* by *Ezekiel*.

In *Cyrus* his *Universal Monarchy*, so *Favourable* to the *people of God*, and so *Great a Type of Christ*, as to be called *Messiah*, or *God's Appointed* Begin the *2300 Years*, and *Moment*; That *staple Line of Time*, that *Reaches* to the very *Glorious Kingdom of Christ*; In the *First Hundred Twenty Four Years* of them, there is, though with *Interruptions*, a *Gradual Restoration* of *Judah*, and *Jerusalem*, *Entering* within the *First Seven Weeks*, or *Forty Nine Years* of that so *Famous*, and by *Christians*, *Universally Agreed Character of Time*, confirming the *Prophetic Standard* of a *Day* for a *Year* to *490 Years*, *Viz. The 70 Weeks*.

Through these runs the very *Dwarf-like* and *Tributary Condition* of the *Jews*, besides some *horrible Inroads* upon them, under the *latter part* of the *Persian*, the *whole* of the *Grecian Monarchy*, and the *beginning* of the *Fourth*, or *Roman*.

At the *last* of these *Weeks*, there is that so *Glorious Exaltation of Time* to its *Fulness* in the *Appearance* of our *true Messiah*, and in the *midst* of it, His *Death* and *Resurrection*; *Greater things* then which till his *Glorious Appearance*, the *Fulness of Times*, or of all *Time*, *Time* cannot contain; In the *other Half*, the *Loud Publication* of the *Gospel* of these *Things*, as by the *Heraldry of Thunder*, began in the *First Seal* Opened by the *Apostles*.

In the *Next Four Hundred*, the *First Seal* is continued, and the *next Three Seals* are *Opened*, in very *Great* and *New Productions* in the *Roman Empire*; till in that *Conclusive Persecution* of the *Christians*, within the *Fifth Seal*, under *Dioclesian*, and the *Contemporary Pagan Emperors*; In the *Sixth Seal*, That so indeed *August Revulsion* of the *Roman Empire* from *Pagan* to *Chri-*

Man, begun by Constantine in the Sixth Seal, continued (Julian's short Reign Excepted) till Vindicated, and Reconstituted by Theodosius the Great, in the Seventh Seal, a Great Pictorial Emblem of the Glorious Kingdom of Christ.

But Early under Constantine, and so going on, That Appearance of the Kingdom of Christ, began to be Eclips'd; And the Barbarous Nations Rushed in on the Empire, in the Just Revenues of Christ upon Antichristian Supplantation (who yet after United as his People, and as Ten Kingdoms under his Ecclesiastick Empire) and Undermine by the Interposal of the Antichristian Moon; so soon that Prophecy gives the Notice of it, as Immediate; in the Sealing the Servants of God, against both the Antichristianism, and the Vengeance in those Trumpets of Vengeance Given into the Hands of the Angelick Ministers of it, the Witnesses Entering into Sackcloth; and the Churches Flight into the Wilderness, or being so Hidden; that it was hard to be Discovered before the Reformation. These Early Notices do beyond All Reasonable Contradiction, Assure the Times and Half Sworn to Antichrist, must needs be now upon the Expiration, which, as before Noted, are cast into Fifteens, in the 1260 Days, into which they are Expounded, to shew their Nearness to Constantine's Time; and because so Determinate a Time, and Short, Compared with the Glory to follow, is styl'd, a Short Time, in God's Answer to the Souls under the Altar; And the Devil considering it, Reflected on it as a Short Time, not as the Father of Lyes, but as it was Extorted from him by God; shew it near Ending.

At the End of 400 Years from the Weeks, of 404. from the Resurrection, and 437. from the Incarnation, Begin the Time, Times and Half with the High Sounds of the Four First Trumpets; Of which That Year was not without its Answerableness to this Prophetick Character, by reason of the Incurfions of the Barbarous Nations, as a Storm of Hail and Fire mingled with Blood, who because They were to become the Subjects of the Antichristian Papacy, are call'd, The Gentiles Entering into the Outward Court; And their 42 Moons Commence, being Solemnly, as it were, Inaugurated into Them by Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria that very Year so Earnest in Adjusting Lunar Time to Solar; At the same Time began that Apostacy the Apostle Paul speaks of in Delay of the Kingdom of Christ; And in such Corruptions of the Doctrine, Worship, and Conversation of Christianity, the

the True Church was Hidden under the Publick Professions so Corrupted, as to be the Church as in a Wilderness, and on which the *Witnesses Prophecy*, That is, Declared Christ's Kingdom in Delay, as in Sackcloth; of which That Year there was a Sample in a Persecution Rais'd by *Genferichs*, a *Vandal Prince*, against the Servants of God Holding the Testimony of *Jesus Christ*, the Eternal Son of God; and It was continued against Those, who Kept the Commandments of God, and Held the Testimony of *Jesus Christ*, by the Papal Tyranny: Within the Four First Trumpets, Fall the so often Burning, and Sacking Rome, the utter Cessation of the Name of Emperor of Rome in the West, and even of Consular Dignity.

At that very Time of the Cessation of Empire begin the Moons of the Papal Antichristian Power, which Prophecy styles The Beast; as a Preparation to which the Hierarchy (as the Historian *Saxonia* Relates) had been Rising Silly, as Feet of Clay from the Earth, and crept silently Forwards into a Dynasty, till by therefore, The Other Beast, which procured for the Grand Beast; thus Came in the Succession of the Beast, Dared to this very Year 476; and so its Succession is Given as the 7th Head, and Eighth King, Rev. 17. For it is in Immediate Succession to the Seventh King, no Head, which was the Christian Emperor in the West.

Then the Bestial Anti-christian Power grew up to its height, or Supremacy at 606, as the Star Fallen to the Earth, within his First Time, and pursued by God with the First Woe, of the *Mahometan* Imposture, at 622; and so to 797, Arm'd in the *Satacenick*, Inrodes upon the Western Parts of the Empire: This continued along the Second Time, or First of the Two Times of his sealed, or constant Power, till the Second Turkish Woe starts out in the Third Time, or Second of the Two Times, where His stint, or the Bounds of his Power were set: Till it came down to the Reformation at the Beginning of his Half Time, at the Year 1517. Where it hath continued an 180 Years, down to the present. 1697, a declined and decayed, but not a Fallen Power, according to the very Importance of Two Times degraded to a Half Time.

Now I would Appeal to all the Reason, and Understanding of Man, whether, when all the Prophetic Images are so expressive of these Events; And that the Line of Time, that Prophecy hath proportion'd to them, when laid to them, is so fairly every

every way Adjustable; *Viz.* From *Cyru* before the *Weeks*; Since the *Weeks*, to the Death and Resurrection of Christ, After the Death, and Resurrection of Christ, and the Preaching of the Apostles at the End of the *Weeks*, in 400 Years of the *Seales*; and the Greater Cantons of *Time*, *Times* Half *Time* dividing, and distributing 1260 Years into 360, 720, 180, and All so according with the very Years, we Vulgarly Account to 1697. I would, I say, appeal to all Sense and Understanding, whether this Account can be the Creature of Fancy, and Imagination, or so much, as of Accident; Except they think, such a Conspiration of so many things; of so great Concernment to the World, and to the Churches of Christ, be below the Notice of the Divine Spirit, or its Care to make them known; For that the very things themselves cannot be contriv'd into such Representations, cannot be once said; when it is so Experimental, that the things, if not so Design'd by the All-seeing Spirit, must by Accident be so subject to the Elaboration of Fancy, and Imagination, or rather of Judgment, and Understanding; Seeing this Threefold Respect is found in Reality, and Substance of *Scripture-Emblems*, of *Scripture-Numbers*, of Correspondent Events, in *History*, and *Chronology*; To say which Undermines All Rationality of Inference from the Greatest Correspondency of Effects in Creation, and Providence, with the Wisdom, and Power of the Supreme Creator, and Governour of All, *Viz.* If we may not Reason from these, to the Intention of Divine Spirit.

Now from hence, I reach the Additional 75, to the *Thousand* Years of the *Blessed State*; *Viz.* From the *Kingdom of Christ* in Succession, in *Thirty* years of the *Sealed Thunders*, opened in *Rev. c. 14.* Making the 1260, 1290. Wherein First there is a Glorious shining out of the Gospel, and the Glory of Christianity for the Conversion, and bringing Multitudes to Christ, and for a Testimony against those who remain obstinate, the *Filthy* being *Filthy* still; And then the *Vials* poured out, that *Time of Trouble*, such as never was, *Since Man was upon Earth*, Through the Forty Five Additional to the 1290, and making them 1335; to the Glorious and Blessed State, and the *Lots of the New Jerusalem*, in the End of these Days, *Dan. 12. 11, 12, 13.*

And in the same way of Evidence, and Assurance, I find my self through the Gracious Assistance of God, able to go backward in the *Analitical*, or *Retrograde* method to the very Death of *Solo-*

man, where I began, and find the Connexion of one thing to another, so Just, so True, so Steadfast, and so Unmovable, that they cannot be dislocated, nor Disjoyned; And the Numbers of Scripture Time so Lock'd, one within another, That they cannot be Wrench'd, or Forced asunder; All which I have in Readiness to offer to every Judicious Considerer, and of which I would give the Briefest Specimen in this following Scheme, that I can Contrive.

The *Thousand Years*, are by all the Wonders of it the most undoubted End, or *Finishing of Wonders*; And the very same with the *Mystery of God to be Finish'd*, by the *Seventh Angel* sounding, according as he hath spoken in Gospel to, and by his *Servants the Prophets*.

This being the *Fullness of Times*, all Times Center, or flow down, and rest in it. Here rest the 45 Last of the 2300 *Eves, Morns*, as is exprest in *Daniel*; The 45 take such hold of the 30, that all the force in the World can't divide them; As is Apparent by 1290 made 1335, the *Thirty* take the same hold of the 1260, Which are the *Times*, and *Half*; That they can no more be separated, then the others; The 1260 in the Three Divisions, *The Half Time* takes hold of the 720, or the two Times; And the two Times of the First Time, or 360, And they can endure no distance; Because they are together one 1260. The 1260 necessarily take hold of whatever Time went before, and lay between the 490 of the *Weeks*, and the 1260; This can be no way contested; Because the *Weeks* by Express Scripture End Three Years, and Half, or *Half a Week* from the Death of Christ; And then we know a Time there must be, from the Beginning of the 1260, of some distance of Space from the End of the *Weeks*; Because from the Three Years and Half after the Death of Christ, so many more Years, then 1260 are now passed, and yet the Great Events at the End of the 1260, not yet come to pass, and therefore not the 1260 themselves. And yet that space must take hold of the End of the *Weeks*, Because the *Half Week* Ends a Three Years, and a Half; *Half a Week*; from the Death of Christ; The *Seventy Weeks*; Notwithstanding, They are divided into Joynts, yet are as close, as the Joynted parts of any the same Member of the Body, being together the *Seventy Weeks*; The *Seventy Weeks* lay an Indisputed Claim to whatever Time went before to *Cyrus*; And every part must be Joynd Each to other, Because all the several

Several Portions of Time stand United in the 2300; And feeling so much Time hath already passed since the End of the Week, as leaves no more then 75 before the Week of the 2300 to Cyrus, we are sure, there can be no more; I confess, there may be Fewer, and so more of the 1260 to Run out then to 97; But so far, as we can be sure, there can be no more than 400 before the 2300. We may be sure, there can be no Fewer, than 75 before the Week.

From Cyrus backward, must be the 40 of Judah's Sin Born, Lying Close to the End of the 390 Days of Israel's Sin Born, which Bring back to the Division of the Tribes into the Two Houses of Israel, and Judah; All which Things have been, and are Ready to be Fully made out to any, who Desire it in particular.

The Undoubted Emblems of Scripture Answering to these Numbers of Time, may be Accounted for with the same Evidence, in this Retrospective Motion, as in the Progression; For the very End of the Wonders is plac'd in the Beast and the False Prophet cast alive into the Lake, And the Glory of Christ's Appearance, and the Armies of Heaven, for whom Thrones were Set, and They Sate upon Them, and They Lived and Reigned with Christ a Thousand Years were such, as did not Worship the Beast, nor Receive his Mark, &c. The Vials, that Brought in the Thousand Years, are Noted to Fall on the Beast, and them that Worship'd the Beast, and had Receiv'd his Mark. The Voices, that prepar'd for the Vials, and at the End of which, the Vials Began, were also upon the Beast; and the Witnesses coming out of the Death, the Beast had laid them under, plainly Entwist the Vials and the Voices with the Beast, and the Witnesses; and so their Times, one with another; viz. with the 1260 Days, the 42 Moons, the Times, and Days, and Half. And in this same manner the Dragon, and they that were Beheaded for the Word of God, and for the Testimony of Jesus, and the Dragon cast down, and the Martyrs of Christ Overcoming, by the Blood of the Lamb, and the Word of his Testimony, and not Loving their Lives unto Death; Seeing the Dragon Gave his Power, and his Seat unto the Beast, shew, very Evidently, that the Moons of the Gentiles, and of the Beast, Began at the End of the Seals. Even as it is most clear in a Progressive Motion, the Seals Issue into the Trumpets, by the Seventh Seal conveying to them; The Trumpets into the Voices by the Seventh Trumpet; the Voices by the Seventh Voice

Voices into the Vials, the Vials by the Seventh Vial into the Thousand Years.

The *Seals* Run plainly Back into the *Weeks*, Beginning in the Confirmation of the Covenant, by that Preaching of the Gospel by the Apostles, Emblem'd by Christ Riding out on his *White Horse*, conquering, and so conquer, at the Ending of the *Weeks*; The *Weeks* Run back into the Time of the Word Going forth for the Restoring *Judah*, and *Jerusalem*, from whence they are Dated; The Going forth of the Word into the *Babylonish Captivity*, which gave Occasion to the going forth of that Word; and the Last *Forty Years* of the *Babylonish Captivity*, which was the Ground of Bearing the Iniquity, or Punishment of the House of *Judah*, clasps Fast with the 390 of Bearing *Israel's Sin*; because God commanded *Ezekiel*, when He had Bore the sin of *Israel* on the Left side, without any Intermision, to Turn on the Other side, and to Bear the sin of the House of *Judah* on the Right side, and the Bearing the Sin of the House of *Israel* goes back to the Division of the Tribes into Two Houses, at *Solomon's Death*.

In the Last Place, I dare Appeal to the Greatest *Chronologers*, or *Historians*, whether our General Accounts do not, within some Fair Proportion, Allow the Years of the *Papacy*, of the *Pagan Power*, of the *Roman Empire*, of the *Grecian*, *Persian*, *Babylonish Kingdoms*, to serve these *Prophetical Accounts*; and so backward by the *Kings of Israel* and *Judah*, to the Death of *Solomon*. Now all these Things, were there Room to Represent Them clearly, particularly, and in Full, would Give such certainty in these Points, according to the Exactness of *Scripture-Time*, as would amount to the Justification of the Great *Hope*, I so publicly make Offer of; and against which, in every minute Particular, I Humbly Pledge my self to be Ready to Receive Exceptions, and to Return Due Satisfaction; and therefore shall now Return to the more General Objections.

This way of Endeavour to Justify every Thing, by Plain Accounts, and Arguments of Reason. Approachable by every Ones Reason, and Subject to the Examination of every Man, whoever will take so much Thought, and Care of Tryal, and Just Judgment upon Himself; may take off much of that Exception; *Why should All This be Reveal'd to you more than to Any Other?*

For The Answer I would give, is, Because God hath engaged my Heart and Thoughts to this Inquiry; And it hath been the Principal Subject of my Intellectual Inquiries, though I hope not in a Neglect of other Points of Theology, and Scripture-Knowledge; But by this means I have been looking every way into All the Advertisements of *Scripture Prophecy*, comparing *Prophecetical Things with Prophecetical*, and any of the most Accurate Memoirs of History and *Chronology*, I could Amass; And This is no other, than what Any Other Studious in these Things, might have Attained; and much Higher, according to the Advantages of Learning, more enlarged Capacities of Mind, Clearness of Expression; as is most experimental in that Excellent Person, *The Announcer on the Revelation*, and his *Annotations*, Published about Four Years ago; The Only Thing that I pretend to, of Peculiar Favour herein from the Most High, is, That he hath thus engaged my Heart, and Thoughts to *separate my self*, and to *intermeddle with this Wisdom*, and Assisted me so far therein.

When any one vouches any Immediate Revelation, that cannot be disprov'd by its plain Disagreeableness to other Sealed Parts of Divine Revelation, though indeed from God; He, and his Revelation are Inaccessible; but by the same Spirit of Revelation, in some suitable Efficacy of the same Spirit, enabling to discern, or to feel the Virtue of it; As in the Apostles Days, When the Prophets spake one by one, 1 Cor. 14. 29. Then the Rest Judged; that is, Discern'd the Divineness of the Revelation; by the Participations of the same Spirit in themselves: But when Any offer the Interpretation of written Prophecies, or Prophecies of Scripture, by the Assistance of the same Spirit that gave them; this Interpretation, if Just, and True, and according to the Sense of the Divine Spirit, is the Spirit of Prophecy; Because it is the Testimony of Jesus, which is the very Essence of the Spirit of Prophecy: Now this is plainly Approvable by All, who wait upon the same Word of God by the Assistance of the same Spirit: I do not therefore in Any of these Prophecetical Discourses, offer at any such thing, as in which the Spirit of the Lord passing by others, should have spoken to me, but what every one hath the same Right, and Open Door to, and Freedom of; and what every one hath a Right to Examine and Accept, or Reject, according to the Evidence he finds of an Agreeableness with the Sure Word of Prophecy or not:

That

That truly I stand up for, is, That He Judge as a Prophet, according to that measure of that Dispensation of the Blessed Spirit, now manifested to his Servants : That is, that he Judge by the Due Compare of Prophecy with Prophecy, by Attendance to every Hint, and Indication of the Prophetic Mind flowing from that Spirit, and that he lay this First, as a Foundation, that the Prophecies of Scripture ought to be Given Heed to ; and that they may be understood as a Light shining in a dark Place : And whoever doth not thus address himself, can no more Judge, then any one could of the Revelations then made by the Spirit to the Prophets of those First Times, when they met in those Prophetic Exercises, without the Communication of the same Spirit to themselves, or then an Illiterate, or unknowing Person in any Science or Art, Can Judge of the Exercitations of the most knowing Poets, or Artists, when they meet together for the Communication of their most Elaborate Exercitations therein : And so I do indeed Claim, and Insist on, this Privilege ; That none undertake to Judge, of what I have offered in these things, but by such Prophetic Preparations, and Attendances upon Scripture Prophecies, that are indeed open to every one that Desires to enter by the Key of Scripture Prophetic Knowledge, and shunt to others. And this is no more Presumption, then whatever one thinks his Privilege, that no one Judge of his Art, but He that Understands it first Himself : And this I hope Vindicates from any undue Assumption of any more, then the Gracious Direction of my Heart, and Thoughts, to that Book of Scripture Prophecy, that Lies open to every one, that draws nigh with due Preparation ; And that every one may Judge of by the same Preparation.

It may be further Objected, that yet it is very hard, if not Impossible to attain the Sense of the Divine Spirit to a Year, or any such Precise Definitive Account of Time.

To this I Answer, It will easily be allowed that the Divine Spirit hath Determin'd, and knows according to that its Expression of it self, to the very Self same Day ; And therefore, seeing it hath given Numbers of Time, it must be to the very Self same Day, For the end of every Number is so Precise, and Definite, That it must needs be to the very Self same Year, and even Day, if we could have, as Punctual Account of Days, as of Years ; But I find not the Holy Spirit ordinarily, is more particular, then Days of

Years: By therefore a due Poize of that True Aspect, of *Prophetick Emblems, Prophetick Numbers, and Providential Effects* in Event, and Matters of Fact; of the Records of which, it hath taken Care by General History, and Chronology, we may come to know to a Year; And of this, Besides several other Assurances that Require more Discourse, There is that Time of the Reformation more Easy, and Immediate to every Observation; wherein Divine Super-Intendencies upon all *Historians* concerning it, to Fix the Beginnings of it in 1517. does so assure the Beginning of *Half Time*, as to assure also the End of *Half Time*, as of an 180 Years, and so of *Time*, and *Times* at 1697. and therefore the Beginning of *Times*, or the *Two Times* at 797. and of the *First Time* at 437. The *Times*, and *Half*, are contrived therefore into such Large *Cantons of Time*, as *One Time, Two Times* and *Half a Time*, that They may be seen in so Large Spaces, and so much together; and yet in such Minute, Exact Divisions, as *Days of Years*, especially and on purpose, that they might be fully known, and exactly understood all along, and at the End. which with so many Concurrences before nam'd, (and of which I should be most Ready to Give the particular State, more at large, to a Free and Desirous, and a Judicious Recipient) does not make it strange to determine so particularly upon 97. and may free from that Objection.

But what is there of Preparation to so great a Change? or what *Instruments* in view for such *Effects*? may it be said. To which, this Answer is to be given: That when we have to do with Him, who *Planted the Heavens, and Laid the Foundations of the Earth*: who telleth the Number of the Stars, and calleth them All by their Names; and appoints them every one their Course, to Fight in; Nothing is Hard. Or how wonderful soever it be in our Eyes, can it be so in His? *Who works his signs, and his wonders in Heaven, and on Earth; and none can stay his Hand, or say unto him, what dost thou? who works, and none can let it: Hath he spoken, and shall he not do it? Is Any Thing too hard for me, saith our Jehovah?*

And as to Means and Instruments, altho he could raise them, if he pleas'd; Yet His Word of Prophecy so expresses the doing of it, as if he would make use of No Hand but his own; The Stone cut out of the Mountain is not in Hands; That Power that stands up against the Prince of Priests, shall be broken without Hand. Now this without Hand, is a manner of speaking, the Spirit of God is pleased, as by the Translation of it from Daniel, into the New Testament, to Apply a Tabernacle made without Hands,

Hands, the Circumcision without Hands; the House not made with Hands, Eternal in the Heavens, appears to be an Expression of God working by an Immediate Power of his own, and by Himself. It is by a Spirit of Life from God, and by a Voice from Heaven. The Four Wheels of the Four Monarchies are brought into the Temple, under the Cherubims; and without any more ado, It was cried concerning them in my Hearing (the Hearing of the Servants of God) Oh Revolution! It immediately pass'd upon them All, and there were Loud Voices in Heaven upon it, proclaiming that Revolution: The Kingdoms of this World are become the Kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ. And this is done at Half Time Ending, which signifies Suddenness, and Surprise. When this is done, He, who does it, Comes with strong Hand; His Arm Rules for Him. He understands his own Work; In the midst of All the Perplexities of it, His work is before him; He understands it perfectly and throughout. Every Spring, every Wheel to be moved, Every Pin of Connexion.

But that which may much indeed Terrify, and Discourage, is the Great Unworthiness of All Sorts and Degrees of Men, of Nations, and even of Churches; so that some very Sweeping Judgment, and Desolation rather, or, at least, is first to be expected.

The Hope yet is, That when God works for his Kingdom, and seems to be Lifting up his Hand to Destroy, He will work for his own Names sake, in a Deliverance. He will consider, He, to whom the Kingdom is to be Given, is worthy: And when the Lord Jesus Christ, the Angel of the Covenant, comes into his Temple, He does not expect to find Refinement ready to his Hand, but He comes to Refine. He hath given an Example in the Apostle Paul of All Long-suffering and Patience, especially prepared for that very Time; Those, who shall Hereafter, in a great distance of Time, Believe on Him, His Reward is with Him. He expects it only from Himself, when his work is so before him. And even to Impenitents there is first a time of Warning and Testimony, and then the Day that will Burn as an Oven, and the wicked are as Ashes under the Soles of the Feet. After this warning is the perdition of ungodly Men reserved for punishment.

I know very well, Notwithstanding, all this Assurance, and the Reason of it, I have given; It will be said yet to me; Seeing this Year 97 is in so near on Approach, and there are no Appearances of such a Succession, or opening of the Kingdom of Christ, ought it not therefore to shake your Confidence, and put a diffidence upon such a continued Affirmation of such a Kingdom to make any Entrance at this Time?

In Answer to this, I would make this Humble Profession, or Confession in these Three things.

First, I cannot be shaken in my assurance; Because I find my Grounds in the Word of God unshakable, and unmoveable; a *False Witness*, that hath no Foundation, Perisheth in this Sense; He cannot Bear up to, nor continue in his Testimony; But, *He that Heareth*, and knows, on what Grounds He speaks, *Assureth constantly*. He that hath *seen nothing*, as the Ground of his Prophecy is like a *Reed shaken with the Wind*; But they, that have the Word of the Lord, Continue to speak it. While I am so certain, The Kingdom of Christ Enters its Succession without any delay, whenever the Last of the Four Kingdoms Ends; That the Third Woe of the Seventh Angel, that Sounds the Kingdom of Christ, Cometh quickly; I look to see therefore, what assurances there are of this Last Kingdom, even its Last State is upon giving up. I find then, the Times and Half, Which are the Term of the Last State, of the Last Kingdom; By the Time since *Constantine*; By the Time, since the *Christian Empire* Demised; By the Time since *Mahometanism* and more Particularly the *Ottoman Empire* hath entred the World; By the Time, since the *Reformation* first entred by *Luther*, just ending. All these have such Lively Sculptures and Engravings, in the Sure word of Prophecy, and their Times so delineated; I do not better know the Course of the Months in the Year, the Days in the Month, or the Hours in the Day, then I know the very Last Year of the 1260 Days of Years, is now entering, and to Run its Circle; and that within its Circle, the Kingdom of Christ will come into its Succession.

The Second thing, that I most Humbly desire to be Stedfast, Unmoveable, Unshaken in, and upon, is the Exceeding Riches of the Grace, and Loving Kindness of God in Jesus Christ, the Great High Priest, and Apostle of my Profession; That Shepherd of the Sheep, that is to Shine forth as the Great Prince, to have That great *AVIA*, that Fold, that is a Court, One Shepherd, and One Fold: the Goodness and Faithfulness of the Spirit of Truth, Guiding into all Truth: Glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ, by taking of the Things, That are His, and so of his Kingdom, and shewing them to his Servants, and shewing them Things that are to Come; I have Great Assurance in his Tenderest Mercies, having Led, and Guided, and Supported me thus far, in the Search after his Kingdom, and Manifested so much to me; He will not Leave me to

be ashamed of my Hope; I can Humbly say, before Him, as his Servant, *Jeremy*: *Oh Lord, thy Words have been Found, and I have Eaten them, and they have been the Joy, and the Rejoicing of my Heart.* I Humbly therefore Expostulate with Him, *Wilt Thou Wilt Thou be to me as a Liar*; I know it is Impossible, *He should Lie, He is God, that cannot Lie*; And therefore herein His Servants may plead with Him; The *Vasion* shall not Lie, He will not be, as *Waters, that are not sure*, of which he hath given so Lively a Description, in comparing the Unfaithfulness of Friends to Them; *My Friends have dealt Deceitfully with me, as a Brook, and as the Streams of Waters, that pass away; Which are Blackish by Reason of Ice, &c. But what Time they are warm, They Vanish, when it is Hot, They are Consumed out of their Place, the Paths of their way are turned aside, They go to nothing, and Perish: The Troops of Tema, Looked, and Plaited; The Companies of Seba were Confounded, Because they had Hoped, they came thither, and were Ashamed.* Jer. 15. 15. &c. Job. 15. 15. &c. How fully does this Express, what *Jeremy* understood by *Waters not sure*! And how Applicable to My Case, if the Hopes I have of the Kingdom of Christ, should prove mistaken.

It may be said, Indeed if I were sure, I had the Right Sense of Scripture-Prophecy, the Argument were enough sure; I therefore herein Rely on his Grace, that he hath Guided me into the Truth of his Word; that as I am sure, *His Word cannot Fail; He cannot Lie*; so neither can any *Iron*, any Created Power break the *Northern Iron*, or prepared Steel of his Widdom, Truth and Power.

But lest any should say, *If you have such a Faith, have it to your self before God, and Happy are you, if you do not find Reason to Condemn your self in what you so much approve*: This therefore is my Third Profession, The things that I have so heard and seen by continual search into, Meditation upon, and seeking Divine Direction in, I cannot but speak; I look upon the Kingdom, as of those Things wherein we should confess Christ, and not be ashamed of him before Men, who so despise his Kingdom; and of those, of which Confession is to be made with the Mouth unto Salvation. And therefore, as I have Humble Hopes, That Jesus Christ hath been Graciously pleas'd to draw out my Heart, Thoughts, Meditations, to search Every Retirement of his Word therein above All, that have been before me; And to give me Greater Confidence and Assurance; and a more open Profession and Publication of what

I have Found, So that he will graciously *Grant, Remission, Pardon, spare me* through the *Multitude* of his Merits, and not deliver up to Shame, and Confusion of Face before Men, and confels me before his Father, and before his Holy Angels.

That such a State of his Kingdom, and such a Revolution with it, and by it, shall this very Year Appear to All the World, as hath never been since the *Apostasy of Humane Nature*; and that therefore All Mighty Works shall shew forth Themselves in it: *The Spirit shall be poured out from on High; The Wilderness shall Become a Fruitful Field; viz. in the highest Purity, and Prosperity of his Churches; and that, which look'd like a Fruitful Field, become Desert, even the Antichristian State, and whatever partakes of it, the Glory of All this World, and the Grandeur of it; and so the Everlasting Gospel shall be preached to every Nation, Tongue and People, and every Thing move to the Glory of that Kingdom.*

To whom then (Most Reverend, and Right Reverend) could I present equally, as to you, the consideration of these things, who, I am assured are so Richly Furnished with all Advantages of Learning, both in that *Sure word of Prophecy*, and in *History*, and *Chronology*, Correspondent therewith; And whose very Title Imports the Office of Those, who are on the *Watch Tower*, waiting for the *Speaking of the Vision*, which will not Tarry beyond its Time; And therefore should be able to Answer the Question, *Watchman, Watchman, what of the Night? Or how Near is the Morning?* and who, as Persons of an Elevated Station, ought to Vindicate your selves by a Higher Zeal for the Kingdom of Christ, and even by a Holy Halte to bring Him to his Throne above others; That you may not Fall under any Ombrage of the *Anti-christian Hierarchy*, who as *Feet of Clay*, are found in the Undermine of the *Kingdom of Christ*; and are Broken by the very First Openings of it, as upon which that *Image Rests*, that Stands in delay of that *Kingdom*.

How therefore should you be able to answer that Question, *What do you more than others for the Kingdom of the Chief Shepherd, who hath in on his Vesture, and on his Thigh, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords? and who Profels to Attend upon him more Near and in Ordinary.*

(155)
 I know, that I am very far from this, and to your Several
 Instructions, and to the several, that I have in the Grounds
 I have done) you would judge, the Grounds themselves I have made to
 so Sage and Learned a Christian, a Protestant Prebendary. There is a
 kind of *Intuitive Knowledge and Plerophory of Satisfaction*, I must (with
 all *Reverence* yet, and *Humble Fear*) Hope I have a Right unto, as
 proper to the having *seen* together the Curious Lines of *Prophecy*, e-
 qual to the Curious Lines and *Symmetry* in the Works of God, which
 the most *Exact Astronomer, Anatomist, Naturalist, Mathematician*,
 hath, or can Observe. I desire the Things I offer might be brought
 into *Serious*est Consultation, and Debate, as in the Days of *Herod*
 concerning the place where *Christ* should be born, so now concerning,
 the Time of his Kingdom appearing. It cannot be but most Great,
 to be the *prophecy* of the Kingdom of this world to be the King-
 doms of the Lord and of his *Christ*. How would it relieve in *All* the
 most *Inextricable* Labyrinths of the present Difficulties of Nations,
 to our Nation particularly, to our King, to the Council of the Nation in
 Parliament: That He, whose Right it is, is now about to take to Him-
 self his Great Power, and to Reign, and to destroy them, who have been
 so long destroying the Earth.

I know, the *Paganizing Nations*, and *Spirits* will be very
Angry, even at the Mention of these Things, as *Utopian, Imagi-
 nary, Fanatical*; and think to Scoff it off; But as an *Hidden and
 Concealed Train*, that Gives Fire, and hath its Effect in a Mo-
 ment; so the Chain of Divine Councils, the Predictions of
 Omniscience in All Times take Full Effect in their own Just
 Moments, how Unawares soever the World be concerning them:
 For He who is *wonderful in Counsel*, and *excellent in working*,
 can neither be out-witted, nor over ruled.

What I offer can be onely from Sense of Duty to declare,
 what I have so Full Assurance of: Duty as to the Great Re-
 vealer of *Prophetical Secrets*, the *wonderful Numberer of the Times
 of Prophecy*; so Duty to the Publick, in the so Generally Ac-
 knowledged Distress of Affairs; For which my Constant Sup-
 plications Ascend, as also for You whose Most Christian Assis-
 tance, and Administration, according to Your Higher Sphere, I

of the said ...
of the said ...
of the said ...

Most Reverend,

Right Reverend,

Your Most Humble Servant,

In The Kingdom of ...

T. BEVERLEY.

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FINIS.

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